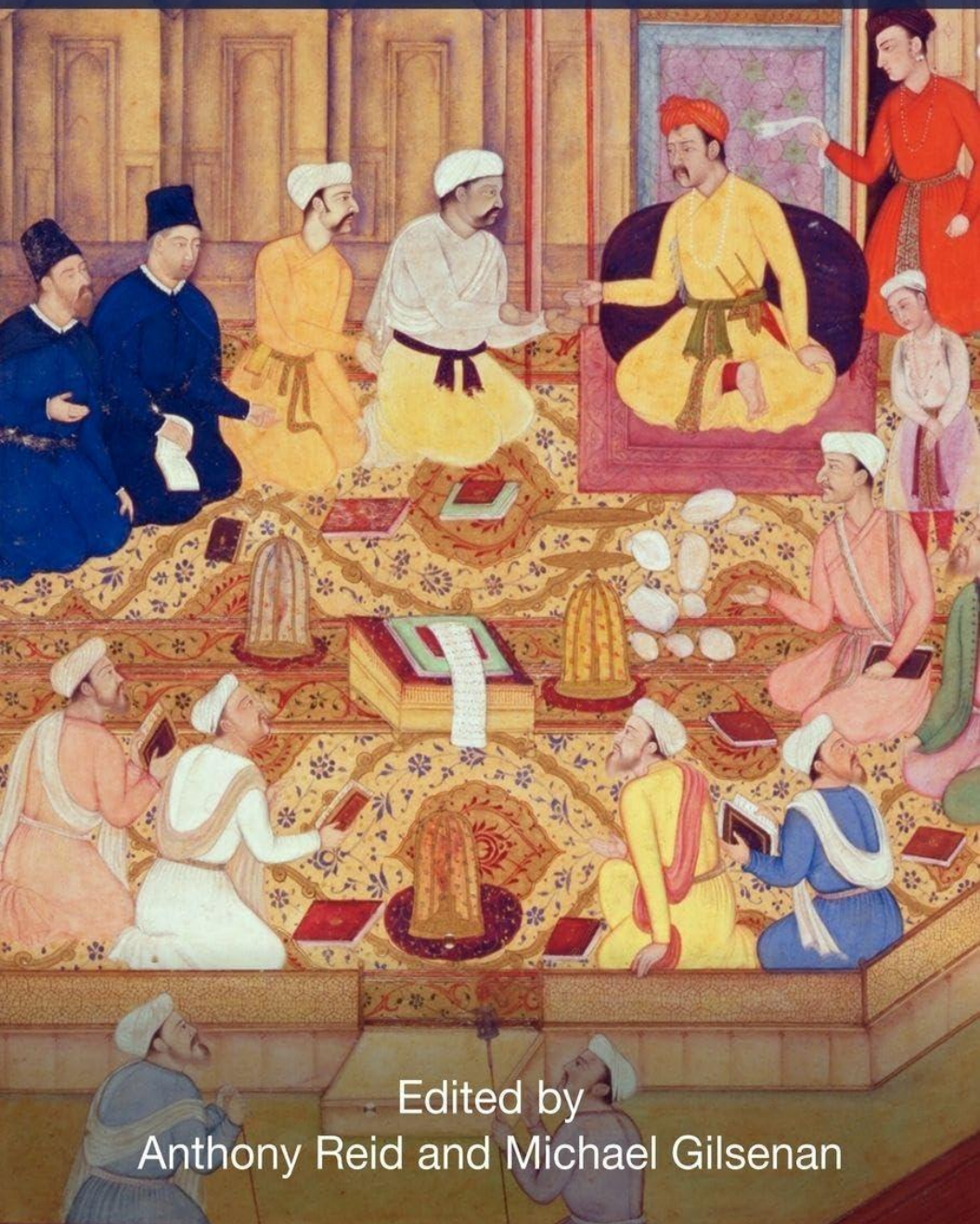


ISLAMIC LEGITIMACY IN A PLURAL ASIA



Edited by
Anthony Reid and Michael Gilsenan



NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

Islamic Legitimacy in a Plural Asia

A global debate has emerged within Islam about how to coexist with democracy. Some radical groups are taking the view that scriptural authority requires either Islamic rule or a state of war with the essentially illegitimate authority of non-Muslims or secularists. This book places the debate in the context of South and South-East Asia – not only the home of the majority of the world's Muslims, but also Islam's historic laboratory in dealing with religious pluralism. Pluralism in Asia is not simply a contemporary development of secular democracies but also a long-tested pattern based on both principle and pragmatism. Asian Muslims have argued for many centuries about the legitimacy of non-Islamic government over Muslims and about the place of non-Muslim peoples, polities and rights under Islamic governance. This book explores and analyses some of the ways these debates have developed, and continue to develop, in South and South-East Asia. The evidence presented here suggests that pluralism has long been a fact of life in this region and has always outlasted attempts, such as those of contemporary political Islamists, to deny its legitimacy.

Anthony Reid was founding Director of the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore (2002), having previously been Professor of South-east Asian History at UCLA (1999–2002) and ANU (1987–99). His books include *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce, 1450–1680*, 2 vols (1988–93), *An Indonesian Frontier: Aceh and other Histories of Sumatra* (2004) and, as editor, *The Making of an Islamic Political Discourse in Southeast Asia* (1993), and *Verandah of Violence: The Historical Background of the Aceh Problem* (2006).

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First published 2007

by Routledge

2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada

by Routledge

270 Madison Ave, New York, NY 10016

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

This edition published in the Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2008.

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Islamic legitimacy in a plural Asia / edited by Anthony Reid and Michael Gilsenan.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. Islam–Asia. 2. Religious pluralism–Islam. 3. Religious pluralism–Asia. 4. Islam and civil society–Asia. I. Reid, Anthony, 1939– II. Gilsenan, Michael.

BP63.A1I866 2007

297.2’72095–dc22

2007026856

ISBN 0-203-93340-0 Master e-book ISBN

ISBN13: 978-0-415-45173-4 (hbk)

ISBN13: 978-0-203-93340-4 (ebk)

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Preface

This book owes its birth to a concern and an institution. The concern was that long-established Asian pluralisms had recently been challenged in the name of a simplified and globalised understanding of the claims of religion. Transnational networks of communication, funding, migration and study have made global and abstract loyalties seem more compelling to many than their local contextualised ones. In this new context, the legitimacy of political accommodation and coexistence conferred by centuries of experience has been challenged, precisely at a time when the global village makes such accommodation essential. The questioning of such arrangements by disaffected Asian Muslims, in particular, called for re-examination of the historical and contemporary place of religion in Asia.

The institution was the Asia Research Institute at the National University of Singapore. It determined from its 2002 beginnings that 'religion and globalisation in Asia' would be one of its key research foci. A search was begun for a distinguished scholar to lead this focus, which eventually led to the appointment of Bryan S. Turner in 2004. Meanwhile, Anthony Reid, as Director, encouraged a number of visiting fellows working on the theme of Islam in contemporary Asia, notably including Merle Ricklefs, Greg Barton, Bassam Tibi, Michael Gilsenan, Eric Tagliocozzo and Rajeswary Brown. A number of workshops addressed aspects of the theme, but the one that inspired this book, in April 2005, was the most central to the above concerns.

The two co-editors convened an impressive range of historians, political scientists, anthropologists, sociologists and students of religion for this conference. Debate was extensive over a broader range of topics than could be included in an effective book. Its geographical focus had to be narrowed to South and Southeast Asia. The views of the writers represented here were influenced by many others, including notably Azyumardi Azra, Greg Barton, Badrus Sholeh, Muzaffar Alam, Shapan Adnan and Julie Chernov who wrote papers, and Riaz Hasan, Noraini Othman, Farid Alatas, Michael Pearson and Peter Reeves who contributed to the debates. Shalini Chauhan of ARI did an excellent job of facilitating the conference.

In preparing this book we have acquired other debts. Tony Reid was assisted initially by Manjit Kaur in assembling and editing the papers, later

by Helen Reid and eventually by Kelly Fu, who put the final manuscript together. Among the contributors Michael Feener was particularly helpful with the glossary and other advice. Tony Reid was also assisted in innumerable ways by Kristy Won Tien Min.

Anthony Reid
Michael Gilsenan

1 Introduction

Muslims and power in a plural Asia

Anthony Reid

A global debate is raging within Islam about how to coexist with democracy. Radical movements opposed to the inequalities of globalisation are reviving long-discredited simplifications that scriptural authority requires either Islamic rule (*dar al-Islam*) or a state of war with the illegitimate authority of non-Muslims or secularists. Pressures of rapid globalisation and urbanisation are nowhere more intense than in Asia, where the precious lessons of a diverse past seem in danger of being forgotten. In Indonesia, conceived since its 1945 origins as a plural state with full equality between all its extremely diverse citizens, the Ulama Council issued a fatwa in 2005 condemning pluralism as unlawful.

This book is designed to place this debate in a specifically Asian context, by reiterating that the home of the majority of the Islamic faithful is also the world's major laboratory of religious pluralism. The first three chapters highlight the global factors at the cutting edge of the confrontation between literalist Islam and an integrating and increasingly democratic world. Bryan S. Turner argues that it is new communications technology that has sharpened the confrontation of ideas, while Abdullah Saeed and Bassam Tibi turn the spotlight onto aspects of Islamic doctrine that have been used by political Islamists to exacerbate division. Professor Saeed examines the flimsy textual basis some Islamists use to question the Islamic legitimacy of those living under non-Islamic authority, while Professor Tibi insists on the need to acknowledge and critically assess those parts of the canonical corpus that are incompatible with a plural and democratic contemporary world. The remaining chapters look at the empirical record in Asia, of how Muslims have managed plurality, whether as rulers, as ruled, or as participants in plural societies struggling towards effective democratic governance.

This introduction provides some historical context for the religious pluralism which is a fact of everyday life in Asia.

An 'Asian' religious pattern

In Asia (east of Afghanistan), pluralism is not simply a contemporary development of secular democracies but a long-tested pattern based on

2 *Introduction*

both principle and pragmatism. Attempts to impose religious uniformity through military and political power were unsuccessful and relatively short-lived. On the other hand, ancient religious communities survived over millennia as minorities interacting with but distinct from their neighbours.

Ancient conquerors who have left us records attest the antiquity of a pattern by which the most successful rulers accepted the religious diversity of their subjects. This was the habit of the more successful Persian rulers, to the extent that the famous cylinder of Cyrus the Great (576–529 BCE), first discovered and translated in 1879, was in 1971 proclaimed by the United Nations as a kind of founding charter of religious rights.¹ Alexander the Great also attempted to be all things to all men, though he had mixed success reconciling the religious expectations of Greeks, Persians, Bactrians and Indians. Genghis Khan is said to have encouraged his family to worship variously, according to Christian, Muslim and Buddhist tenets.

Exclusivist religious ideas of orthodoxy and homogeneity, of course, made their way to Asia, notably at the hands of adherents of the religions of Abraham. The fateful historic entanglement of both Christianity and Islam with political power, in their different ways, led the first of their adherents who carried arms into Asia to believe that their faith justified either military domination or constant battle. But the experience of Asian diversity gradually taught them to flourish by living with it as rulers, traders, missionaries and mystics. Intense interactions made possible both mutual learning and accommodation for some and the purity of uncontaminated exclusive enclaves for others. This book is primarily concerned with the multiple ways in which Muslims experienced these situations and justified them in Islamic terms.

Visitors from more homogeneous parts of the world found the diversity of the cities of Asia intriguing, 'exotic' and baffling. An American missionary noted of Singapore in the 1830s, as 'in every other part' of southern Asia, that 'each class of the community preserves the costume, manners and religion of its ancestry. This has long ceased to look odd to me.'² It continues to be a tourist stereotype of the eastern city that temple, mosque, gurdwara and church jostle each other in the same neighbourhoods, and communities take turns to celebrate their festivals for the edification or entertainment of non-believing fellow citizens. In much of eastern Asia, Buddhist identities overlap with Taoist, shamanist or Shinto ones, to confound the single-choice exclusiveness of a religious census. Where does this pattern originate?

To simplify, there appear to at least three deep origins of what might be considered an 'Asian' religious pattern. The first is based in the Asian environment, a world of vast but shifting empires in the land mass and of cosmopolitan ports on the sea routes. The great empire-builders of the land mass had to manage different peoples and religions. The seas of the Indian Ocean, on the other hand, for millennia carried traders of very different cultural and religious allegiance to ports where they did business with one

another. While all international ports were to some extent cosmopolitan, the diversity was much more marked in Asian than in European cities until the modern age of globalisation. The scale of interactions was simply larger. Put another way, the European pattern was historically anomalous after the rise of Islam, in the way Christendom was almost completely isolated from interaction with other religions between the eighth and sixteenth centuries. The crusading states in the Holy Land, the seven-centuries-long history of Muslim/Christian relations in Al-Andalus and the alternating tolerance and persecution of Jewish minorities in some areas were significant exceptions to this pattern, but their very creative marginality serves to highlight the point.

The second source was essentially an Indic tradition whereby religion centred on an abundance of sacred sites and ritual practices, rather than the definition of boundaries and orthodoxies that political power imposed on the Abrahamic faiths in their strongholds. 'Hinduism is a federation of faiths... rather than a single homogeneous religion.'³ The experience of diversity was explained in the Rig Veda by the aphorism that 'the Absolute is one, although the sages have given it different names.'⁴ While this philosophy was intended to explain the existence of various streams of the Hindu tradition 'there is no logical stopping place',⁵ and the same logic was applied to Jainism, Sikhism, Islam, Christianity and Zoroastrianism in India, and with Buddhism in early Southeast Asia. This will be discussed further below.

The third origin was quite different, in the insistence of the Chinese court (somewhat like that of Rome) that the emperor himself was principal mediator between the world and the cosmos. The emperor was, therefore, not interested in imposing any orthodoxy other than a Confucian secular one as the definition of Chineseness. Any religion held to challenge the emperor's centrality was regarded with deep suspicion and hostility. But these attitudes did allow, in Korea, Japan and Vietnam as well as in China, various schools of Buddhism to overlap and interact with Taoism, Confucianism, Shinto and shamanism in ways that seemed contradictory to European minds. Muslims and Christians found the political system baffling but in many respects admirable, and they flourished just in so far as they were not seen to challenge the emperor's monopoly on cosmic power. When that did happen, to Muslims in fourteenth-century Quanzhou or nineteenth-century Yunnan,⁶ or to Christians in seventeenth-century Japan and nineteenth-century Vietnam and Korea, the persecution was very severe. Until today the North-East Asian tradition, while favourable to religious pluralism, has proved unusually resistant to full religious freedom in the contemporary sense.

This book is concerned with the already sufficiently diverse worlds of southern Asia. We cannot here do justice to the traditions of North-East Asia, therefore, save to note that they complement what is in effect an 'Asian' pattern of religious pluralism. In other words, these Asian diversities serve to emphasise the 'parochialism' (to borrow Dipesh Chakravarty's

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concept⁷) of the markedly different European and West Asian models, despite the latter's dominating the literature to the point of normativeness.

The Southeast Asian mix

In India, Buddhism was marginalised by the fifth century of the common era, though remaining strong in Bengal until the twelfth. Yet, great centres of Buddhist learning and pilgrimage, including the cosmopolitan 'university' of Nalanda, continued to be supported by Hindu kings until Nalanda was sacked by Turkic invaders in 1193. In the rest of Asia, Buddhism continued to flourish, coexisting with Hinduism in much of Southeast Asia and with Taoism, Shinto and shamanism in North-East Asia. By the fifteenth century, Theravada Buddhism dominated many parts of mainland Southeast Asia and Sri Lanka but never sought to eliminate Hinduism altogether. The surviving kings in Thailand and Cambodia retain the services of Brahmins to perform Hindu rituals essential to kingship,⁸ while the Hindu epics, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, continue to enchant Javanese Muslims and Thai, Cambodian, Burmese and Sri Lankan Buddhists today.

Java offers an intriguing example of the pluralism of Southeast Asia at work. Its two most spectacular temple complexes are the Buddhist Borobudur, and the Hindu Loro Jonggrang temple near Prambanan, both dated to the eighth to ninth centuries and only about 50 kilometres apart. Until recently, it was assumed by Western scholars and their Javanese successors that these must have been built by rival dynasties succeeding one another in the central Javanese heartland – the Buddhist Sailendras from their South Sumatran base, and the Javanese Hindu Sanjaya dynasty. The newer scholarship has been forced to concede, by virtue of the existence of undisturbed Hindu monuments in close proximity to Buddhist ones and vice versa, that the monuments 'may be the products of a carefully maintained balance, a peaceful coexistence [of the two religions] in which an element of competition was never absent.'⁹ Bokyung Kim has shown that there was more likely only one dynasty in Central Java at this time though with competing branches, that the building of the two temples overlapped in time and that one of the key patrons of the completion of Borobudur was a Saivite king with a Buddhist wife.¹⁰

The later East Javanese kingdoms of Singhasari and Majapahit (mid-thirteenth to sixteenth centuries) left a literary record that makes this theme even more explicit. The Buddhist monk and poet Mpu Tantular celebrated not only his own Buddhist faith but also the other two crucial elements of the kingdom's inherent balance – Saivite priests and the hermits of the indigenous tradition of *resi* ascetics.¹¹ It became a theme of Javanese mysticism that different ritual paths to enlightenment such as Buddhism and Hinduism were only external expressions of an inner oneness. The state motto of contemporary Indonesia (*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*) derives from a fourteenth-century mystical poem, the *Sutasoma*, in which Mpu Tantular

pondered the essential oneness beneath surface differences, such as those between Buddhism, Saivism, and the new, still marginal presence of Islam: 'the truth of Jina (Buddha) and the truth of Shiva is one; / they are indeed different, but they remain one, as there is no duality in Truth'.¹²

Is this pattern still relevant, even if perpetuated in the Indonesian national logo? One of Benedict Anderson's less-known early writings celebrated the way the beloved and highly syncretic shadow puppets of the *wayang* tradition embodied a really fundamental acceptance of diversity:

Partly by historical accident and partly also, I believe, out of a deep awareness of the complex inter-relatedness of human existence, traditional Javanese civilisation developed a style of ethics, morality and philosophy, best expressed in *wayang*, which helped to give each man a sense of his own dignity and honor, and sustained and legitimized a tolerance which one cannot but profoundly respect.¹³

Already aware that 'on the tree of Javanese culture the leaves are dropping one by one', Anderson asked whether the *wayang*'s honouring of extremely different personalities and beliefs could withstand the onslaught of nationalism and Westernisation (new exclusivist interpretations of Islam were not yet the major threat on his horizon).¹⁴ The answer appeared to come only a few months later when Javanese slaughtered hundreds of thousands of alleged 'communists' in their midst, in the name of nationalism, Islam or Javanese-ness. Since 1998, Javanese Islamists have yielded to none in their readiness to bomb and kill those assumed to disagree with them. As Anderson had recognised, 'tolerance in all human communities is a highly fragile thing'.¹⁵ Success in establishing diversity by one generation can be made to seem a provocation to its successor. The profound Javanese conviction of inner unity has never eliminated violence against perceived misfits. Nevertheless, in a contemporary world in which diversity is being required of all societies as a price of survival in a globalised world, the historic lessons of plural Asian societies are particularly precious.

Islam encounters plural Asia

Muslims began to experience this pattern first by sea as traders. Within decades of the death of the Prophet, Islam had expanded to the major arteries of global trade linking the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean worlds, and Muslim merchants began to journey as far as southern India for pepper, the Indonesian Archipelago for spices and Quanzhou in China for silks and ceramics. Muslim enclave communities took their place alongside devotees of myriad deities and spirits all around the Indian Ocean. In some frontiers, they established little port states under Muslim rule, but the larger settlements were in cities ruled by followers of different paths (not yet labelled Hindus, Buddhists, Zoroastrians or animists). In Calicut in today's

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Kerala, Muslim writers like Ibn Battuta in the fourteenth century and Abdul Razzaq in the fifteenth appreciated the justice of its Hindu regime, which treated every vessel correctly and equally regardless of the religion of its owner.¹⁶

We have comparable sources on the Siamese port capital of Ayutthaya only in the seventeenth century, but there is no doubt that Muslims, Christians and Chinese Buddhists were finding a congenial home there from at least the fifteenth. The unusual curiosity and eclecticism of King Narai (1656–88) brought high-level missions from both Christian and Muslim countries hoping to win him to their faith. Though the scribes of these missions were inherently hostile to the ‘idolatry’ they perceived in Theravada Buddhism, they gave testimony to what seemed to them the great tolerance of all religions. A perceptive French source understood that the key to Ayutthaya’s success was in allowing foreign merchants to settle ‘with the liberty of living according to their own customs, and of publicly exercising their several ways of worship.’¹⁷ A Persian Muslim scribe noted that when his countrymen pointed out with concern to the King that Christian traders had been able ‘to convert about five or six thousand natives’, Narai responded ‘that he has no interest in the matter and that the people may adhere to whatever religion they wish as long as they remain part of his peasantry.’¹⁸

In reality, both Christian and Muslim proselytes found converts almost exclusively among the great diversity of minority communities and refugees in the capital, and the tight connection between the King and Buddhist *sangha* made conversions out of this mainstream very rare. On the other hand, acceptance of the naturalness of diversity was deeply rooted. The best expression of King Narai’s own thinking is evident in a speech he required his Minister Faulcon to set down in writing to reject the request of the French King Louis XIV that he should change ‘a religion received and followed throughout my whole kingdom without interruption during the space of two thousand, two hundred and twenty-nine years.’ He expressed surprise that King Louis should assume that God wanted all men to follow a single faith and ritual, whereas God himself seemed to rejoice in the great diversity of his human creation. ‘Ought not one to think that the true God takes as great pleasure to be honoured by different worships and ceremonies, as [he does] to be glorified by a prodigious number of creatures.’¹⁹

Islam also came to northern India by war, the first Arab conquerors reaching Sind as early as the eighth century. The great scientist and encyclopaedist Abu Rayhan al-Biruni (973–1048) travelled extensively in Kashmir and Punjab with the conquering armies of Mahmud of Ghazni in the 1020s, learned Sanskrit and translated several works into Arabic. His *al-Hind* (*India*) was the earliest ethnographic portrait by a foreign scholar and, of course, contributed to the characterisation of India’s religious diversity, particularly the dichotomy of Shiva and Vishnu cults, as part of a single ‘Hindu’ system. He noted how this system differed from the Islam he knew.

'On the whole there is very little disputing about theological topics among them; at the utmost, they fight with words, but they will never stake their soul or body or their property on religious controversy.'²⁰

Although a sharp boundary between Muslim and unbeliever was helpful to the former (as to later Christian conquistadors) in fighting their wars, it was a hindrance to their legitimacy as rulers over very diverse populations. While conquest, plunder and destruction of Hindu temples were a feature of Turkic dynasties of the eleventh and twelfth centuries whose central ambitions lay outside India, Richard Eaton has shown that the first India-based dynasty, the Delhi Sultanate (1206–1526) developed a quite different strategy. It patronised India-born Sufi sheikhs of the Chishti order as the principal means of Islamic expansion. Many of these showed an interest in the yogic mystical techniques long practised in the sub-continent, while their sacred graves attracted worshippers across the religious spectrum. The sultans patronised and protected the shrines of their majority Hindu subjects, appointed Hindus to rule large populations and developed hybrid styles of music and literature. Hindu temples and images were destroyed when they represented the symbolic power of a defeated enemy but preserved and protected as places of worship of subject and allied populations.²¹ Modern Indian art, architecture, literature and music emerged from the interaction of Islam with the older traditions, without, however, subordinating or incorporating the latter.

The Mughal pattern inaugurated by Sultan Akbar (r. 1556–1605) went further, treating temples as state property and incorporating them into 'a hierarchy of hybridized political and religious power that descended downward from the Mughal emperor.'²² Some subsequent rulers, and notably the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb (r. 1658–1707), saw this pattern of religious pluralism as weakness and sought to impose the *syariah* by force of arms across as much of South Asia as his armies could extend. Whereas Akbar had provided economic equality among his subjects by abolishing the canonical poll tax on non-Muslims (*jizya*) in 1562, Aurangzeb fuelled Hindu hostility by restoring it in 1679. But this went too far for safety, alienating vital non-Muslim allies, such as the Rajputs, and exhausting the goodwill as well as the treasure of the empire. A reaction was under way in the last decades of his reign which saw Hindus and Sikhs giving their support to rebel warriors of their own faith. Mughal control continued to decline after his death, and there was a greater polarisation between Muslim and Hindu on the eve of British hegemony.

In Southeast Asia, the initial stage of Islamic expansion was marked by intense interaction and syncretism, with conquest playing only a necessary but minor role in eliminating the dynasties that held out against Islam. The most sacred sites of Hindu-Buddhist scholarship and meditation accepted Sufi mystical masters as fellow-seekers, and were in many cases gradually taken over by them. The smaller Muslim port kingdoms of Indonesia, moreover, were not successors to the imperial idea of ruling over many kings and peoples of different faiths. Kings made the adjustment to Islam

gradually and syncretically. As van Bruinessen notes, adoption rather than conversion was the process, 'for the Javanese were deliberately syncretistic. For many of the new Muslims Islam, especially in its Sufi variety, was a welcome additional source of spiritual power, not a substitute for what they already had.'²³ The embracing of Islam by the rulers of the Mataram heartland of Central Java in the sixteenth century was a process designed to bring all their followers with them. Through constant wars, some of which pitted an externally oriented literalist Islam with coastal and non-Javanese allies against a Dutch-backed alternative coalition, the rulers gradually established what Merle Ricklefs calls a 'mystic synthesis', whereby 'the ecumenical genius of mysticism' created the bridge between the rich literature and wisdom of the Javanese and Islam.²⁴ Only in the minority of cases where a more legalistic understanding of Islam was spread at the point of a sword did peoples emerge who defined their identity by rejecting it – as the Balinese, Batak and Toraja did. Elsewhere, among Javanese, Malays and Bugis in general, pluralism almost as great as India's in terms of ritual practice was maintained under the overall label of Islam.

As in India, legalistic Islam peaked in Indonesia in the mid-seventeenth century and provoked a reaction to return to syncretism and inclusiveness. The greatest patron of the shariah was Sultan Iskandar Thani of Aceh (r. 1637–41), who endowed with state power the hard line of Nurud-din ar-Raniri. Under Raniri's guidance, he imposed many requirements of Islamic law, excluded Chinese traders from Aceh, apparently because of their pork-eating, and executed many captives who refused to accept Islam. He used the *murtadd* (apostasy) doctrine to silence the leaders of the mystical *wujudhiyya* tradition, which had done much to bring Southeast Asians into Islam. Raniri had the books of Hamzah Fansuri and Shams ud-Din as-Samatrani (d. 1630) burned in front of the great mosque. Their disciples who refused to renounce their monistic views were executed for apostasy, including the popular Sheikh Jamaluddin.

Raniri lost his state power when Sultan Iskandar Thani died in 1641, and a reaction against his excesses set in immediately. Sayf al-Rijal, a disciple of the executed sheikh, returned to Aceh from his studies in Arabia and bitterly attacked al-Raniri's views and actions.²⁵ In effect, the crowd decided in favour of Sayf al-Rijal, the Aceh establishment accepted the popular view, and, in 1643, the learned Gujarati fled back to his birthplace in India. A consensus may be said to have developed in Aceh that pluralism was essential; Christians, Chinese and diverse types of Muslim were admitted to the port (as had always been the case in the other great Muslim trading centres, Banten and Makasar); and the state desire for uniformity should not be taken to such extremes. Aceh's most beloved Sufi master Sheikh Abdurrauf as-Singkili (1617–93) epitomised this consensus, refusing to condemn either the views of Hamzah Fansuri or of Raniri.

The Aceh elite had earlier spurned Raniri's advice by putting a woman on the throne and were so pleased with the results that they enthroned three

subsequent women. The four queens of Aceh covered the whole period 1641–99, when cosmopolitan pluralism returned to the Acehnese capital, including a lively Chinese camp and a Christian minority served by Franciscan priests. In this they emulated the strategy of two other commercially inclined sultanates of the period, Patani, the leading Muslim port-state of the peninsula (from 1564 to 1680s) and the Maldives, who also showed a repeated preference for female rule not previously known in the region.²⁶ What were the advantages of female rule that could have persuaded specifically Muslim merchant-aristocrat elites to defy both local and Muslim tradition in this way? In part, it was a device for protecting the pluralism essential to a great Asian port. Since the same juristic purists who had argued that Chinese should be expelled and religious dissidents and Christians executed held that women could not exercise the religious authority of a sultan, queens might be exempt from the need to impose such laws. When appealed to by competing *ulama*, Queen Safiyyat ud-din declined to resolve a certain debate because she had no authority on religious matters.²⁷ Female rule appears to have been used as a means to avoid pushing disagreements to the ultimate limit, and to legitimate, by default of a sole religious authority, the pluralism that was essential to stable commerce.

Colonial ‘non-interference’

European conquerors, like Muslim ones before them, adjusted to the established Asian pattern. Christendom breached the Muslim wall that had separated it from Asia’s diversity at a time when exclusive ideas of religious uniformity were at a peak, immediately following the expulsion of Jews and Muslims from Spain and Portugal. Both Iberian powers initially engaged in plunder of Muslim shipping and intolerance of various non-Catholic worship on territory they controlled. But Asian realities obliged the Portuguese in Macao, Cochin and elsewhere to work with this diversity and form commercial symbioses with it. The later comers, Dutch, English and French, learned from the experience of the Iberians and, in particular, from the exceptional wealth which Spanish Manila had by the 1600s come to draw from the visits of Chinese ships and the immigration of Chinese craftsmen of every kind. Chinese, Indian and South-East Asian traders would use ports by preference that allowed them traditional freedoms of religion, as Indian and Southeast Asian ports had long done. The Northern Europeans learned the formula and, from the beginnings of their power, allowed religious freedoms in Asia that they denied in Europe.

The first great advocate of this strategy was Jan Pieterszoon Coen, who in 1616 wrote to the East India Company about his plan,

to establish a place where so great a concourse of people would come to us, Chinese, Malay, Javanese, Klings and all other nations, to reside and trade in peace and freedom under Your Excellency’s [VOC] jurisdiction,

that soon a city would be peopled and the staple of the trade attracted, so that [Portuguese] Melaka would fall to nothing.²⁸

By 'freedom', he meant in particular religious pluralism, whereby the different trading communities could each publicly practise their own faith. Such was the pattern in Muslim Banten, the leading Java port at the time of the Dutch arrival, and in founding the VOC (Dutch East India Company) headquarters at Batavia (Jakarta) just 60 kilometres to its east in 1619, he could afford to offer no less. European commercial enclaves in South-East Asia (Batavia, Melaka, Makassar, Rangoon, Penang, Singapore and Saigon) became places necessarily of various forms of Chinese worship and, thereafter, of Sunni and Shi'a Islam, Catholic and Protestant, Armenian orthodox, Jewish, Buddhist and Hindu. In India, European commercial centres no less than indigenous-ruled ones had to be endowed with various types of temple and mosque. The European rulers of port-enclaves had their state churches within the fort or close to it, but beyond these confines diversity ruled.

Whatever policies of discrimination the earliest European intruders applied in their first beachheads in Asia could not continue when Europeans became effective rulers over millions. Indeed, the reluctance of both British and Dutch East India Companies from their origins to promote Christian missions in any way had contributed to their becoming the effective arbiters over millions of Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists by the middle of the nineteenth century. Although inheriting much from the decaying Mughal administration of northern India, the British could not share any of their predecessor's religious claims to legitimacy. What had been a pragmatic caution in religious matters became a state doctrine of religious 'non-interference', announced from the British throne following the threat posed by the Muslim-based Indian mutiny of 1857. This doctrine held, in effect, that 'religion was too explosive. State interests were best protected by severing all connections and by refusing to pass laws which could in any way offend religious sensibilities.'²⁹ Although reformers on the ground insisted on intruding into some matters, and more aggressively so as the administration became more Indian after the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms of 1919, non-interference remained an article of faith among the highest levels of the Raj.

For the Netherlands regime in what became Indonesia, Islam was a more central problem, and the principal perceived threat before the rise of Marxism and nationalism in the 1920s. The great problem for government policy was the long-running war to conquer Aceh (1873–1903), where Islam became in the 1880s the principal motif of resistance. The architect of a 'solution' was the brilliant Islamicist Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje, who followed a report on Mecca and its *jawa* (Indonesian) community, based on five months there in 1885, with an incisive report on Aceh itself where he worked in 1891–2.³⁰ As principal government adviser on Islamic matters

thereafter, he brought a confidence and expertise lacking in other colonial regimes. He insisted that learned *ulama* be treated with appropriate respect in religious matters and that the pilgrimage to Mecca should be freed from unnecessary constraints. On the other hand, those who pursued a jihadist agenda in politics should be suppressed with all means necessary. Like Bassam Tibi in this volume, he was convinced that eliminating the doctrine of armed *jihad* was a prerequisite for Muslims to come to terms with modernity. A leading figure of the new ethical policy after 1900, he championed a liberal Dutch education for the Indonesian elite, partly to provide an alternative magnet to that of the Hijaz and Islamic solidarity.³¹

The three middle chapters of this book explore some of the ways in which Asian Muslims debated their situation under European colonial rule. Azmi Özcan analyses some of the adjustments Muslims in South Asia made to the end of the Ottoman Empire and its claim to a universal caliphate among Muslims – a problem also debated by the subject of Barbara Metcalf's chapter, Maulana Madani. Madani's more central concern, however, particularly for the purpose of this book, was to find Islamic arguments to support the concept of India as a plural community of Muslims and non-Muslims, against both the idealism of Iqbal and the Islamism of Maududi. He found these arguments in the Prophet's alliances with non-Muslims to oppose a common enemy. Nico Kaptein, in the following chapter, analyses the arguments of a leading *ulama* in Netherlands India, Sayyid Othman, that Muslims should obey the laws of the colonial government because it was just. In line with the Sunni mainstream, he argued that any government that kept order justly was to be supported as preferable to anarchy.

Nationalism, communalism and the state

The colonial governments continued the pre-colonial pattern of religious pluralism, but they also intensified and prolonged that pattern into the age of nationalism and democracy, which might in other circumstances have fragmented empires along more homogeneous religious or linguistic lines (as happened to the Hapsburg Empire after 1918 and to Yugoslavia after 1990). As a general rule, nationalism in these plural colonies accepted the physical boundaries of the colony as the definition of the state, rather than seeking coherence on a religious base. The leading nationalists argued passionately for the need to sink religious differences beneath the overarching demands of anti-colonial struggle. At least for Gandhi in India and Sukarno in Indonesia, this was far more than a tactical move – they profoundly believed in the underlying unity of the great faiths. In every case, even including the Pakistan described in Imran Ali's essay below, the post-war successor states were defined by geographic borders and ruled by secular governments.

The need to mobilise populations for elections, on the other hand, brought religion into the process of party formation. The first stage of

party formation in Burma was Buddhist; in Indonesia, Islamic. By the 1920s, however, these initial formations had given way to essentially secular political parties in all of southern Asia. The determination of the Muslim League in India to demand a separate state for majority Muslim areas is the only exception to the pattern of accepting a secular, geographical, religiously plural definition of statehood. As Imran Ali shows below, Pakistan too behaved as a secular democracy in its early years.

The final four chapters discuss the rise of Islamist demands in Pakistan, Indonesia and Malaysia, and the extent to which this constitutes a threat to established pluralisms. In Pakistan and Indonesia, Islamist parties did not fare well at the polls, despite the overwhelming majority of Muslims in the population. Michael Feener traces the intellectual roots of Indonesian Islamism through Natsir and Harjono. Greg Fealy revisits the Nahdlatul Ulama party of Indonesia's fourth President Abdurrahman Wahid to find that its conversion to pluralism and withdrawal from party politics was less complete and less modern in its implications than had been hoped. Finally, Joseph Liow examines the seemingly inexorable 'Islamisation race' between the two biggest parties in Malaysia at the expense of the country's plural foundations.

The experience of Muslims in Asia is wonderfully diverse, and this book hardly begins to do justice to the debates to which that experience has given rise. It suffices to show, however, the value of consulting Asia's rich tradition of pluralism as we negotiate the globalised and interconnected path that lies ahead.

Notes

- 1 The text has been variously translated and essentially states that the conqueror has restored the gods to their respective temples, after his vanquished predecessor had sought to impose religious uniformity. A translation by Leo Oppenheim is included in J. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern texts relating to the Old Testament*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1950.
- 2 Howard Malcolm, *Travels in Southeastern Asia*, London: Charles Tilt, Vol. II, 1839, p. 101.
- 3 T.N. Madan, 'Religions of India: Plurality and Pluralism', in Jamal Malik and Helmut Reifeld (eds) *Religious Pluralism in South Asia and Europe*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 42.
- 4 *Ibid.*, p. 67.
- 5 D. Smith (ed.) *South Asian Politics and Religion*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1966, p. 6
- 6 The most recent study of the Panthay rebellion and the massacres involved in its suppression is D. Atwill, *The Chinese Sultanate: Islam, Ethnicity and the Panthay Rebellion in Southwest China, 1856–1873*, Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2006.
- 7 Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000.
- 8 S.J. Tambiah, *Buddhism and the Spirit Cults in North-East Thailand*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970, pp. 252–60.

- 9 J. Fontein, *The Sculpture of Indonesia*, Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1990, p. 38, cited by Bokyung Kim, 'Politics, Religions, and Arts: The Relationship between Borobudur and Loro Jonggrong in Central Java (Indonesia)', Unpublished UCLA dissertation, 2007, p. 14.
- 10 Bokyung Kim, Chapter 1, *passim*. Also A.R. Kinney, *Worshipping Siva and Buddha: The Temple Art of East Java*, Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 2003.
- 11 T. Hunter, 'The Body of the King: Reappraising Singhasari Period Syncretism', *Journal of South-East Asian Studies*, 2007, No. 38, Vol. I, pp. 27–53.
- 12 'Mangka ng Jinatwa kalawan Siwatatwa tunggal, / Bhinnêka tunggal ika tan hana dharma mangrwa.' This quotation comes from canto 139, stanza 5, as presented in Soewito Santoso, *Sutasoma, a Study in Old Javanese Wajrayana*, New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1975, p. 578.
- 13 B. Anderson, *Mythology and the Tolerance of the Javanese*, Ithaca, N.Y.: Modern Indonesia Project of Cornell University, 1965, p. 30.
- 14 *Ibid.*, p. 29.
- 15 *Ibid.*, p. 30.
- 16 'Journey of Abd-er-Razzak', in R.H. Major (ed.) *India in the Fifteenth Century, Being a Collection of Narratives of Voyages to India*, London: Hakluyt, 1857, p. 14.
- 17 Simon de La Loubère, *The Kingdom of Siam* (1693) reprinted Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1969, p. 112.
- 18 *The Ship of Sulaiman*, translated from the Persian by John O'Kane, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972, pp. 120–1.
- 19 G. Tachard, *A Relation of the Voyage to Siam, Performed by Six Jesuits Sent by the French King, to the Indies and China in the year 1685*, London 1688, reprinted Bangkok, 1981, pp. 223–4.
- 20 R.C. Zaehner, *Hinduism*, London: Oxford University Press, 1966, p. 4.
- 21 R. Eaton, *Essays on Islam and Indian History*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. 98–115.
- 22 *Ibid.*, p. 116.
- 23 Martin van Bruinessen, 'Muslims, Minorities and Modernity: The Restructuring of Heterodoxy in the Middle East and Southeast Asia', Inaugural Lecture, Utrecht University, 21 November 2000.
- 24 M.C. Ricklefs, *Mystic Synthesis in Java: A History of Islamization from the Fourteenth to the Early Nineteenth Centuries*, Norwalk, Conn.: EastBridge, 2006, pp. 222–3.
- 25 Al-Raniri, Fath al-Mubin, as translated in Azyumardi Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia: Networks of Malay-Indonesian and Middle Eastern 'Ulamā' in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries*, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2004, pp. 60–1.
- 26 A. Reid, 'Charismatic Queens of Southern Asia', *History Today*, June 2003, No. 53, Vol. 6, pp. 30–5.
- 27 Azyumardi, *The Origins*, p. 61.
- 28 Coen to VOC, 10.10. 1616, in Jan Pieterszoon Coen, *Bescheiden Betreffende zijn Verblif in Indie*, The Hague: Nijhoff, 1919, Vol. I, p. 215.
- 29 F. Presler, *Religion under Bureaucracy: Policy and Administration for Hindu Temples in South India*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987, p. 7.
- 30 C. Snouck Hurgronje, *Mekka*, Leiden: Brill, 1888–9, 2 vols, translated by J.H. Monahan as *Mekka in the Latter Part of the 19th century*, Leiden: Brill, 1931. C. Snouck Hurgronje, *De Atjehers*, Leiden: Brill, 1895, translated by A.W.S. O'Sullivan as *The Achehnese*, Leiden: Brill, 1906, 2 vols.
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2 Muslims under non-Muslim rule

Evolution of a discourse

Abdullah Saeed

One of the most contentious views today among some Muslims living under non-Muslim rule – for example in Singapore or Australia – is that Muslims in these countries are not somehow ‘fully’ Muslim. This supposes that unless a Muslim’s life is governed by Islamic legal norms, the person’s Islam is compromised. Citizenship of such countries is seen to be problematic as it implies the voluntary acceptance of non-Muslim rule. Although this view does not appear to be held by the vast majority of Muslims under non-Muslim rule, it has a significant appeal among at least some Muslims who live as part of a minority. However small the number of these Muslims may be, they utilise classical *fiqh* concepts such as *dar al-Islam* (abode of Islam) and *dar al-harb* (abode of war) as well as the most uncompromising views on Muslim residence under non-Muslim rule that were advocated in classical *fiqh*. The widespread acceptance of such views, if this occurs, particularly among the youth in Muslim minority contexts, could have serious consequences for these communities and those of which they are a part. The purpose of this chapter is to survey the range of views among Muslims on the issue of Muslim residence under non-Muslim rule. It does not attempt to cover the issue in any depth. While the examples provided in this chapter are not specifically related to Asia, these ideas can easily be found among certain sections of Muslim communities living under non-Muslim rule in various parts of Asia.

There is very little textual basis for the opinion that Muslims are not permitted to reside and live under non-Muslim rule. This chapter suggests that the juristic debate on this issue developed in response to specific concerns and in specific socio-political contexts. Contemporary issues have triggered the debates between Muslims who argue that residence under non-Muslim rule compromises one’s Islam and those who justify residence under non-Muslim rule as legitimate.¹

There are several key issues in this debate. These include the permissibility or otherwise of a Muslim’s residence under non-Muslim rule, the obligations of Muslims with regard to the laws in force where they reside and the issue of Muslims in any society as being part of the *umma*.² In this chapter, I will not deal with all of these issues. My objective is only to

summarise some of the key points in the debate on the legitimacy of Muslim residence under non-Muslim rule and to highlight the close relationship between the positions developed in *fiqh* and the socio-political contexts to which Muslims have responded in developing those positions. My aim is to demonstrate the changing nature of the debate, the diversity of views among Muslims and to provide some examples to illustrate my perspective on this issue.

Dar al-islam and dar al-harb

Much of the *fiqh* debate on Muslim residence under non-Muslim rule uses the division of the world into *dar al-islam* and *dar al-harb* (or *dar al-kufr*) as a starting point. It is believed that *dar al-islam* and *dar al-harb* are two distinctly identifiable geopolitical units. *Dar al-islam* can be roughly translated as ‘abode of Islam’, and *dar al-harb* as ‘abode of war’. These terms are not found in the Qur’an or the *hadith* but were developed by the classical Muslim jurists. The term *dar al-islam* came to signify Islamic territory and, for the majority of the jurists, it suggests a geopolitical unit in which Islam is the state religion. Therefore, the signs of

legitimacy by which one could speak of a geopolitical unit as *dar al-islam* would include a ruler or ruling class whose self-identity is Islamic, some institutional mechanisms by which consultation between the political and religious elites is possible, and a commitment to engage in political and military struggle to extend the borders of the *dar al-islam*.³

On the other hand, *dar al-harb* referred to the territory that was not governed by Muslims. More specifically, ‘these territories are geopolitical units within which Islam is not the established religion, where the ruler is not Muslim, and where there exists no mechanism by which political and military leaders may seek the counsel of Islamic religious specialists.’⁴ This sharp distinction originated in a time of territorial contestation. The key idea was that *dar al-harb* was actually or potentially enemy territory that Muslims should avoid for both religious and security reasons.

The division notwithstanding, some Muslims chose to live under non-Muslim rule. During the Prophet’s time – and based on his instructions – approximately eighty Muslims from Mecca fled to Christian Abyssinia and lived there. They remained there for several years even after the Prophet had migrated to Medina in 622 CE. In subsequent periods, individuals chose to live among non-Muslims, primarily for trade purposes but also as emissaries for rulers or simply as converts to Islam living amidst a non-Muslim population. Some reports suggest, for instance, that during the governorship of al-Hajjaj b. Yusuf (d. 714) in Iraq during the Umayyad period, many Muslims fled Iraq from his persecution and oppressive policies and settled in Malabar (in India) under Hindu rule.⁵ The trend continued on a

much larger scale and for different reasons during subsequent periods. Despite this continuous presence of Muslims under non-Muslim rule, there were no systematic juristic discussions on the issue in the first three to four centuries of Islam.⁶

In the early history of Islam, with the conquests that began immediately after the death of the Prophet, Muslims viewed the world in terms of *dar al-Islam* and *dar al-harb*. The Muslim state (caliphate) was politically and militarily strong during the Rashidun (632–60), Umayyad (661–750), and early Abbasid (750–850) periods.⁷ During this time, Muslim-ruled territory was clearly identifiable. Up to the middle of the ninth century CE, it had a unified political authority in the office of the caliph. Thus a unified *dar al-islam* vis-à-vis a *dar al-harb* made ‘sense’. However, from the late ninth century (following the end of the powerful early Abbasid caliphs), the unified *dar al-Islam* began to splinter, with several Muslim territories competing with one another over territory and power. The Umayyads in Spain established their own emirate in 756. Over time, other Muslim emirates and caliphates emerged. Sometimes, these states allied themselves with non-Muslim powers, for example with Christians in the Iberian Peninsula or Mongols in Central and West Asia. Consequently, there was a blurring of the boundaries of *dar al-Islam* and *dar al-harb*. From the eleventh century CE, the idea of an ‘abode of Islam’, in the form of a unified caliphate, no longer existed.

Juristic analysis

The Qur’an did not consider it to be problematic for Muslims to live among non-Muslims in Mecca during the time of the Prophet (610–22). It was only after the Prophet established a ‘Muslim territory’ in Medina following his migration from Mecca that the Qur’an instructed Meccan Muslims to migrate to Medina⁸ as a way to consolidate and strengthen the Muslim community there. This instruction was not a general command to migrate from a ‘non-Muslim’ to a ‘Muslim’ territory as such. This is reflected in that in other parts of the Qur’an, it indicates that what matters is not whether Muslims live in non-Muslim areas but whether in such areas they are free from oppression and persecution. The Prophet encouraged Muslims to flee persecution in Mecca and seek refuge even with a Christian ruler, in Abyssinia. When his teaching spread across Arabia, the Prophet accepted the fact that individual Muslims would live amongst and sometimes be ruled by pagans and Christians under the rule of their non-Muslim tribes.⁹

These verses in the Qur’an and the *hadith* provided the basis for the jurists to debate the issue of Muslim residence under non-Muslim rule. Moreover, in the *fiqh* of the seventh and eighth centuries CE, the jurists were interpreting such texts in the light of the socio-political situation of their own time in which a powerful, unified caliphate ruling in the name of Islam existed. With Muslim political hegemony established, a legal-theological framework was then developed that accommodated the view that:

- (a) the powerful Muslim caliphate was the protector of Islam and Muslims;
- (b) that no non-Muslim state could challenge the caliphate;
- (c) that non-Muslims in the caliphate were not the equals of Muslims;
- (d) that Islam was the true, authentic and final religion;
- (e) that all others had to acknowledge the authority and dominance of Islam;
- (f) that non-Muslim states which opposed the Islamic state should be considered enemies to be fought against, conquered and finally subjugated.

This approach to non-Muslim territories was also associated with the idea that non-Muslim territories adjoining the Islamic caliphate could pose an external military threat to the Muslim state and that such a threat should be eliminated through military or peaceful means.

From the seventh to the eleventh centuries CE, there was no systematic treatment of the issue of Muslim residence in a non-Muslim state by the jurists.¹⁰ Imam Malik (d. 769) of the strictest school of law (Maliki school) with regard to Muslim residence under non-Muslim rule opined that Muslims should not reside in non-Muslim territories under any circumstances. Malik apparently disapproved of Muslims travelling to non-Muslim lands even for business.¹¹ This position was adopted by subsequent Maliki jurists and has been maintained to a large extent until the modern period. While Malik's position may have been motivated by a range of factors such as the undesirability of exposure of Muslims to non-Muslim laws, values and norms to avoidance of non-Muslims in general, subsequent generations of Maliki jurists interpreted Malik's position with respect to the realities they were observing with reference to the Muslim presence under non-Muslim rule.¹²

While Malikis tended to be the strictest with regard to Muslim residence under non-Muslim rule, the other schools of law such as Shafi'i, Hanbalis and Hanafis and even Shi'a were more lenient and flexible. For instance, Tabari (d. 923), a commentator on the Qur'an, believed that the ability to practise religion is the key determinant in any discussion on the permissibility of Muslim residence. For Shafi'i (d. 820), Muslims may reside in non-Muslim territories if there is no fear that they may be enticed away from their religion; it is the practical dangers that were the main consideration. The Hanafi jurist Shaybani (d. 805) argued that Muslims are not obliged to migrate from a non-Muslim to a Muslim territory. Abu Hanifa (d. 767) believed that non-Muslim territory should not be a permanent place of residence for Muslims. For some Shi'a scholars, in some cases it is believed that it is more advantageous to reside in a non-Muslim territory if that territory is free from oppression and persecution.¹³

Among the ideas that dominated the thinking of jurists on the question of residence was that by residing under non-Muslim rule, they would inadvertently be strengthening the 'enemy', that they may be acquiring certain undesirable values and norms from the unbelievers and that they would be

compromising the notion of the supremacy of Islam over other religions. Muslim political power was at its height from the seventh to the tenth centuries CE and the inability of non-Muslims to challenge the Muslim power was obvious to these scholars. On the basis of the theological positions developed during this period, for these scholars, the non-Muslims had no universal and true religion; their religions (be they Christianity, Judaism or any other) were considered to be 'beneath' Islam.

At a social level, in many contexts non-Muslim norms and customs were believed to be inappropriate for Muslims. Non-Muslims, for example, in Spain were labelled at times as 'uncivilised' and 'crude'.¹⁴ Thus, while some form of social interaction with non-Muslims was unavoidable, a strict separation even at a theological-legal level was seen as important, doubtless justifying such positions on selected qur'anic and *hadith* texts that appear to emphasise the supremacy of Islam over other religions. This view of Islam also considered that any territory that did not submit to Islamic power would be regarded *dar al-harb* which Muslims may legitimately attack, subdue and/or force it to acknowledge the supremacy of Islam through paying tribute to the Muslim state. In this, many texts of the Qur'an that emphasise common bonds between Muslims and non-Muslims, the qur'anic acknowledgement of the validity of other religions such as Judaism and Christianity and the ideas associated with non-aggression were disregarded. Much of the *fiqh* thinking on the non-Muslim 'other' was conceptualised on the basis of the supremacy of Islam and Muslims and the belief in having the most perfect truth with them. Once these ideas emerged, they seem to have dominated the juristic thinking on Muslim-non-Muslim relations.

This political-military supremacy of Islam and Muslim suffered a 'battering' from the eleventh century CE onwards. While there are many examples of this, I will highlight two that are directly related to the issues being explored in this chapter: Muslims in the West (Spain) under Christian rule, and Muslims in the East under Mongol rule.

It was in response to the developments in the political-military arena in areas such as Spain (in the Muslim West) and Mongol invasion (in the Muslim East) that more refined views on Muslims under non-Muslim rule emerged from the eleventh century onwards. The changed context reflected:

- Former Muslim-ruled territories had become part of non-Muslim territory.
- Some Muslims who lived in such areas had begun to live in humiliating conditions (particularly in Spain and Sicily).
- The unified Muslim state no longer existed; rather, much of the previously unified Muslim territory had fragmented as a result of political and religious differences.

Muslims under Christian rule in Spain

For almost 500 years, from approximately 720 to 1200 CE, Muslims dominated most of the Iberian Peninsula (which they called *al-Andalus*). The

reconquest of Spain by Christians took place largely over the course of the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries with the fall of Toledo in 1085; Córdoba in 1236, Valencia in 1238, Murcia in 1243, Seville in 1248, and Cádiz in 1265 and, finally, the Muslim kingdom of Granada fell in 1492. This reconquest brought a large number of Muslims under non-Muslim rule. From the thirteenth century, Muslims lived permanently in all of the five Spanish Christian kingdoms. Each kingdom had its own policies with regard to its Muslim subjects.¹⁵ Muslims moved from being rulers to being ruled, meaning that Muslims under Christian rule suffered discrimination and restrictions in line with the norms prevalent at the time, in much the same way certain Muslim rulers imposed their particular forms of discriminatory practices when they were the rulers.

In Spain, at certain periods of Christian rule, among the restrictions on Muslims were that Muslims were not permitted to build mosques in Christian areas. They also had to wear distinctive clothing, to pay a poll tax and were prohibited from having sexual relations with Christian women.¹⁶ The oppression of Muslims varied; however, the clearest example occurred in Granada in the sixteenth century. This was in the form of forced mass conversions of Muslims to Christianity, ending with the total expulsion of the Muslims and their descendants. Forced mass conversions in Granada led to revolts in 1499–1500 and again in 1568; after being defeated this second time, they were given the choice of conversion or expulsion.¹⁷ Many Muslims accepted conversion, but these converts to Christianity were never accepted fully by the other Christians. In 1567, for example, a decree forbade use of Muslim names, clothing and Arabic language. Their customs and ceremonies were forbidden, their cemeteries closed. Muslims were even forbidden to observe the prohibition related to eating pork.¹⁸ Finally, Muslims were expelled from Spain in 1609.

The jurists of Maliki school of law which dominated Islamic law in Spain had to come to terms with this problem. Malikis from the time of Imam Malik remained rather hostile to the idea of Muslims residing in non-Muslim territory. In Spain, for example, the Maliki jurist Ibn Rushd (d. 1122) insisted that not only was it forbidden for Muslims to travel to non-Muslim territories but that anyone who converted to Islam in a non-Muslim land had to leave and migrate to a Muslim polity. To prevent Muslims from travelling to non-Muslim lands, he even proposed that checkpoints be built on land and sea. Again, Ibn Rushd's position reflects what he saw first hand with regard to Muslims under Christian rule in parts of Spain at the time. Similarly, a few centuries later, the Maliki jurist al-Wansharisi (d. 1508) of North Africa saw that many Muslims in Spain under Christian rule were experiencing very harsh conditions, including forced conversions to Christianity. For him, it was obligatory for Muslims to migrate from the 'lands of disbelief' to the 'land of Islam'. He argued that this obligation remains in force till the Day of Judgement.

In one of his fatwas, al-Wansharisi gave several reasons why Muslims in Spain should migrate to a Muslim land after the Christian takeover:

- that Islam would not be honoured, rather humiliated;
- that prayer (*salat*) would be made fun of leading to its abandonment;
- that *zakat* would be nullified since there would be no imam to collect it;
- that fasting in Ramadan would be nullified as there would be no imam to oversee its beginning and end;
- that *hajj* would become defunct as Muslims would not be able to perform it;
- that Muslims would be subject to humiliation and contempt suffering ridicule to the extent that no self-respecting person would tolerate;
- that the honour of Muslims, their persons and property would be jeopardised;
- that Muslims would be constantly exposed to all forms of vices, ‘impurities’ and religiously questionable foods.¹⁹

On another occasion, al-Wansharisi described the dangers of living under Christian rule as follows:

One has to beware of the pervasive effect of their way of life, their language, their dress, their objectionable habits, and influence on people living with them over a long period of time, as has occurred with the people of Avila and other places. They have lost their Arabic, and when the Arabic language dies out, so does devotion in it and there is consequential neglect of worship as expressed in words in all its richness and outstanding virtues... Living with unbelievers is not permissible, not so much as for one hour a day, because of all the dirt and filth involved, and the religious as well as secular corruption, which continues all the time.²⁰

This was not just a Muslim view of the religious ‘other’: similar views were held commonly among Christians of Muslims.²¹ It was important even in *al-Andalus* for the Christians, Jews and Muslims to maintain the divided zones along ‘invisible lines’. Each community had its zone, which outsiders might enter only at their peril. Equally through a fragile social consensus, other areas would be common ground such as a market place or a road.²²

Muslims under Mongol rule

The situation was quite different in the Muslim East, where the other major schools of law – Hanafi, Hanbali and Shafi’i – prevailed. However, the Muslim East was also subject to Christian conquest. In this case, the Crusaders were able to conquer parts of the Muslim East between 1096 and 1291. The Crusaders, however, were eventually defeated and the lands came under Muslim rule. In the Muslim East, the most significant events in this context were associated with the Mongol invasion of a large area of the Muslim world. The cities of Bukhara and Samarkand fell to Genghis

Khan's armies in 1220. By 1221, the Persian cities of Merv, Nishapur and Balkh had also been taken. In the pillaging that followed Mongol attacks, the invaders decimated the population of these regions, sparing only the artisans whom they considered to be useful.

The Persian city of Isfahan fell in 1237, and Baghdad, the Abbasid capital, fell in 1258. Thus, Mongols seized what was then seen as the heartland of Islam. Scholars questioned whether living under the non-Muslim Mongol rule was acceptable according to Islamic law. The key issue for Shafi'is, Hanafis and Hanbalis was whether the Muslims had a degree of freedom to practise the basics of their religion and whether their persons and property were safe. If so, Muslims were permitted to remain under non-Muslim rule, but they were expected to manage their affairs in such a way that it did not contribute to the military strength of the non-Muslim territory in which they were residing.

These schools did not urge Muslims to migrate to a Muslim territory. In some cases, jurists of these schools, in particular Shafi'is, argued that under certain circumstances, Muslims in fact must remain in non-Muslim territories and should not migrate to Muslim territories.²³ It seems that these jurists were taking into consideration the fact that migration of large number of Muslims would lead to a weakening of the rest of the Muslims there, and that any hope of spreading Islam in those territories would be jeopardised if a large-scale migration took place. Similarly, if the Muslims under non-Muslim rule were as a result of a conquest by non-Muslims (as was the case with the Muslim East under the Crusaders or Mongols), a large-scale migration would not help in recovering these lands from non-Muslim rule.

To further support their argument, several scholars argued that the lands (under Crusaders or Mongols) were historically Muslim and only temporarily ruled by non-Muslims and should therefore still be considered *dar al-islam*. Thus, for the jurists of these schools, as long as Muslims were free to practise the basics of their religion, they did not need to migrate. The reality was that the conquering of such a vast area of Muslim territories by the Mongols, who followed Shamanism, made it inconceivable for many Muslims to leave their homeland and move somewhere else. More significantly, the Mongols were not as fanatical as the Christians who reconquered Spain and were willing to let Muslims live within an Islamic legal framework. This context gave rise to the pragmatic view of the Shafi'i and Hanafi jurists.

Muslims under Western colonial rule and the question of citizenship

The positions adopted in *fiqh* with regard to Muslim residence under non-Muslim rule came to be used again in the modern period when Western powers, such as France and Britain, colonised large parts of the Muslim world in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Once more, the question was whether Muslims should remain under non-Muslim European colonial rule and whether these areas were to be categorised as *dar al-islam*

or *dar al-harb*. Muslims, who were in favour of a *jihad* against the colonial powers, argued that the areas under colonial rule had become *dar al-harb*, and therefore, they were justified in waging war against the colonial power. Others who were not inclined or were unable to confront the colonial powers argued that the minimum requirements for a *dar al-islam* still existed in the Muslim lands under colonial rule: the freedom to practise the basics of their religion such as the prayer, *zakat*, *hajj* and fasting.

It was in this context of colonial rule that the topic of citizenship of a colonial power, as apart from the issue of residence, arose. In early twentieth-century France, there was a law that if a Muslim under French rule, say in Algeria, was willing to forego Islamic law and adopt French civil law, that person could be granted French citizenship. Numerous Muslims, especially from the elite, in search of a better life and overwhelmed by the economic, political and intellectual dominance of the colonists, sought French citizenship. If a Muslim married a non-Muslim French citizen and wanted to move to France, for example, French citizenship was particularly attractive.²⁴

Several *ulama* of North Africa, especially in Algeria and Tunisia, argued that taking up French citizenship, in the instance noted above, was equal to apostasy (*ridda*), since citizenship was perceived as being linked to religious identity and any attempt to move away from the Muslim community by taking up foreign citizenship was tantamount to 'leaving' Islam. In this context, Algeria provides an interesting example.²⁵ Ali Merad has shown that Muslim scholars of the Islahi (Reformist) or Salafi orientation interpreted change of citizenship, popular amongst the French-educated class, in two significant ways: as the abandonment of one's personal status (Islamic), making one no longer accountable to Islamic law, or as an act of desertion of one's nation. Two Muslim reformist newspapers in North Africa famously denounced the taking of French citizenship. In 1930, T. A. Madani, in the *Shihab* newspaper, said:

We are now at a very critical point in our history. Today, two ways are open before us... One of these two ways is that of 'naturalisation.' That is to say, the way leading to abandonment of one's nationality and language, the rejection of one's history and of [Islamic] tradition.²⁶

In another case, also in 1930, the Muslim Student Union of North Africa in Paris voted to reject admission of all naturalised students as members. This decision, according to Merad, was based on a fatwa that had appeared in *Shihab*. The fatwa says:

We understand that those who renounce the Islamic law could not be considered Muslim, given that Islam is not only a faith but also a religion and personal status at the same time. Hence, although the naturalised person [claims to] maintain his faith, he nonetheless, rejects our personal status when he takes the initiative [of taking that citizenship].²⁷

Merad states that, in their campaign against naturalisation, 'the reformist leaders had explicitly ex-communicated their coreligionists who had taken up French citizenship.'²⁸ He then quotes the Algerian Islamic leader Shaykh Abd al-Hamid b. Badis (d. 1940), according to whom 'those who renounce the Islamic law are necessarily apostates.'²⁹ Finally, Merad refers to the fatwa of Shaykh Tahir b. Ashur of Tunisia, who affirmed that naturalised citizens were apostates who could come back to Islam only after they repented before a Muslim judge (*qadi*).³⁰ This debate centred on an equation between citizenship and religion, doubtless facilitated by classical binary notions of *dar al-islam* and *dar al-harb*. The argument was an effective deterrent to those who wanted to 'leave' their community. It must be said, however, that Muslims who took up French citizenship did not necessarily give up their faith (Islam), nor did they openly reject Islamic law. But the fatwas on citizenship, driven largely by the need to oppose the colonial power and weaken it, were closely related to the political situation that existed at the time.

Muslims in the West under non-Muslim rule: 'participant' Muslims and citizenship of a Western country

Perhaps the most vexing debate on the question of Muslim residence under non-Muslim rule today rests with Muslim thinkers and scholars based in the West. A key factor for them is that Muslim presence in the West – in the forms of residence and citizenship – is permanent and, hence, must be justified on an Islamic basis. For scholars and thinkers in the West, this is a fundamental question about their identity. In the pre-modern period, it was relatively easy for religious communities – even if they were minorities – to function as a single entity under their own religious law: Jews under Jewish law; Muslims under Islamic law. This was because of the way in which religious communities were often treated in great empires, where freedom to practise a religion under the guidance of their religious leaders was allowed, as was the case under the Ottomans. Religious communities were considered independent entities with their own norms, rules and laws. In the modern period, the emergence of nation-states based on the idea of common citizenship has changed that situation dramatically. Thus, Muslims in the West have to find ways of functioning as Muslims and also as citizens of Western countries.

There are three broad categories into which Muslims in the West can be placed, as far as their approach to living under non-Muslim rule in the West is concerned:³¹

1. Those who live in the West but are reluctant to take part in Western society as full members ('isolationists').
2. Those who have some admiration for Western values but are undecided as to whether they want to be full members of the society ('semi-isolationists').

3. Those who are Western in their make-up and have no difficulty in being Western and Muslim (participants).

The first category relies on the classical concept of *dar al-harb* and considers residence as problematic; the second has some concerns but is not prepared to label the West as *dar al-harb*. The third category does not consider classical concepts such as *dar al-harb* as relevant to their circumstances. It is this third category (which I call 'participant Muslims') that is most relevant to our discussion.

'Participant' Muslims represent what we may refer to as 'the emerging Western tradition of Islam.' It is a product of a fusion of Islam with the Western environment and Western liberal democratic values. It has been most visible since the 1990s through the writings of a number of Muslim scholars based in the West such as Tariq Ramadan,³² Bassam Tibi³³ and Muqtader Khan.³⁴

This Western tradition of Islam is being driven mostly by the 'indigenisation' of Islam in the West. It is espoused mostly by second- or third-generation Muslims, other indigenous Muslims and converts to Islam from other systems of belief. Many professional and middle-class Muslims also belong to this strand. Its frame of reference is the local environment of the West, and its inspiration comes from that context. This Western tradition of Islam is challenging traditional understandings of a range of important issues in order to suit the social, cultural, political and intellectual context of Muslims in the West. These Muslims are using *ijtihad* to put forward bold solutions to contemporary concerns.³⁵

Participant Muslims reject the idea that one cannot be fully Muslim unless one is ruled by 'Islamic law', not secular law. They do not make a sharp distinction between Islamic law and secular law in their daily lives. Provided laws support notions such as justice, equity, equality and public interest, these Muslims will respect those laws as being Islamic in intention or essence. They take abiding by the laws in the countries of which they are citizens seriously and consider that as part of being obedient to God. Respect and obedience to the laws of the land (even though the authorities may not be Muslims) were also emphasised by classical Muslim jurists in their writings. Difficulties arise primarily if laws prohibit fundamental Islamic beliefs or practices such as prayer, fasting and *zakat*. In this context, even the laws that permit things like gambling, prostitution or alcohol are not considered particularly problematic as such laws do not *oblige* Muslims to engage in those practices.

Relying on a range of concepts in the Qur'an and taking into consideration their circumstances in the West, participant Muslims reject pre-modern concepts such as *dar al-harb* and *dar al-islam*, which divide the world into 'us' and 'them' – the world of Islam and the world of the infidel. They believe that such labels are obsolete in discussing today's political entities such as nation-states, membership of which is not based on religious

affiliation. Tariq Ramadan, a theorist of what he calls 'European Islam', argues there are five fundamental rights that are secured in European/Western societies:

1. The right to practise Islam.
2. The right to knowledge.
3. The right to found organisations.
4. The right to autonomous representation.
5. The right to appeal to law.

Where these rights exist, he argues, that place should be considered an 'abode of Islam'.

For the participant Muslims, citizenship is a contract, the terms of which Muslims are obliged to honour, including obeying all the laws in force in the country, paying taxes and contributing to the well-being of the country. As far as social relations are concerned, Muslims must deal with all people, regardless of their faiths, on the basis of honesty, trustworthiness and justice.³⁶

Against this, hard-line isolationists among Muslims in the West 'claim that a Muslim cannot be bound by a constitution which allows interest, alcohol and other behaviour which contradicts Islamic teachings.'³⁷ Tariq Ramadan rejects such a notion and argues that such a position cannot be justified:

if European constitutions effectively allow such transactions or behaviour, they do not *oblige* Muslims to resort to them or to act in such a way. Therefore they must, on the one hand, respect the running legislation – since their presence is based on a tacit or explicit pact – and, on the other, avoid all kinds of activities or involvements which are in opposition to their belief.³⁸

Concluding remarks

A large number of Muslim scholars today argue that living under non-Muslim rule is acceptable. Their key concern is whether there is religious freedom, personal safety and security. The juristic debate on the question has been and is constantly shifting in line with the changes in the socio-political context. A clear example of this rethinking is found among Muslims in the West. Contemporary circumstances in the West have led, for instance, participant Muslims to reject simplistic notions of citizenship, arguing that, although difficult and challenging, a rethinking of Islamic law is necessary for Muslims living in the West. This does not diminish the ability to live an 'Islamic' life; rather, it changes the manner and form that this takes.

Notes

- 1 In writing this paper, I benefited from the pioneering work of Khaled Abou El Fadl in his two articles on this issue: 'Legal Debates on Muslim Minorities: Between Rejection and Accommodation', *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 1994, Vol. 22, No. 1, pp. 127–62; and 'Islamic Law and Muslim Minorities: The Juristic Discourse on Muslim Minorities from the Second/Eighth to the Eleventh/Seventeenth Centuries', *Islamic Law and Society*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 1994, pp. 141–87.
- 2 Abou El Fadl, 'Legal Debates on Muslim Minorities', p. 129.
- 3 J. Kelsay, 'Dar al-Islam' in Richard C. Martin (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World*, New York: Macmillan, 2003, Vol. I, p. 169.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 K.S. Lal, 'Indian Muslims: Who Are They', *Voice of India*. Available online at < <http://voi.org/books/imwat/ch1.htm> > (accessed 7 May 2007).
- 6 Much of the debate, where it exists, appears to have been in response to Hanafi views on the permissibility of certain practices for Muslims in the domain of *dar al-harb*.
- 7 After the caliphate of al-Mu'tasim and that of his son, al-Wathiq (842–7), the centralised power of the caliphate declined. By 945, the area around Iraq fell to a dynasty known as the Buyids.
- 8 Qur'an 2:218; 4:89.
- 9 While the Qur'an expected Muslims and also Christians and Jews to govern their affairs in light of God's instructions, it did not consider the implementation of Islamic law, as it was understood in the post-prophetic period, as the key determinant of the legitimacy of Muslim residence in a particular territory. Muslim jurists who supported the view that Muslims may reside in non-Muslim lands often argued that Muslims were to abide by the rules and regulations of those lands.
- 10 Abou El Fadl, 'Legal Debates on Muslim Minorities', p. 136.
- 11 Sunni Path: Questions and Answers Forum, 'Muslims, Islamic Law and Public Policy in the United States'. In response to the issue, answered by Sherman (Abd al-Hakim) A. Jackson, Available at http://qa.sunnipath.com/issue_view.asp?HD=1&ID=2625&CATE=124 (accessed 7 May 2007).
- 12 Sunni Path: Questions and Answers Forum, 'Muslims, Islamic Law and Public Policy in the United States'.
- 13 See for these views, Abou El Fadl, 'Legal Debates on Muslim Minorities', pp. 134–5.
- 14 Andrew Wheatcroft, *Infidels: The Conflict between Christendom and Islam 638–2002*, London: Viking, 2003.
- 15 Ibid, p. 99.
- 16 Ibid, p. 101.
- 17 J. Goody, *Islam in Europe*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004.
- 18 Goody, *Islam in Europe*, p. 34.
- 19 Sunni Path: Questions and Answers Forum, 'Muslims, Islamic Law and Public Policy in the United States'.
- 20 Abu al-Abbas Ahmad al-Wansharisi, *Kitab al-mi'yar al-mugrib*, Rabat: 1981, Translated by L.P. Harvey, *Islamic Spain 1250–1500*, Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1990, pp. 58–9.
- 21 Wheatcroft, *Infidels*, pp. 75–6.
- 22 Ibid, p. 77.
- 23 Sunni Path: Questions and Answers Forum, 'Muslims, Islamic Law and Public Policy in the United States'.
- 24 This section on citizenship is based on the author's work in Abdullah Saeed and Hassan Saeed, *Freedom of Religion, Apostasy and Islam*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004, pp. 116–18.

- 25 Redha Ameer translated these texts from Ali Merad, *Le Réformisme Musulman en Algérie: de 1925 à 1940: essai d'histoire religieuse et sociale*, Paris: Mouton, 1967, pp. 404–9. These are cited in Saeed and Saeed, *Freedom of Religion, Apostasy and Islam*, pp. 116–18.
- 26 Merad, *Le Réformisme*, p. 407.
- 27 Ibid.
- 28 Ibid.
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 Merad, *Le Réformisme*, p. 408, n. 1.
- 31 Abdullah Saeed, 'Muslims in the West: Co-Existence or Conflict? Between Isolationists and Participants', Unpublished paper.
- 32 T. Ramadan, *To Be a European Muslim*, Leicester: Islamic Foundation, 1999.
- 33 B. Tibi, 'Muslim Migrants in Europe: Between Euro-Islam and Ghettoization', in Nezar AlSayyad and Manuel Castells (eds), *Muslim Europe or Euro-Islam: Politics, Culture, and Citizenship in the Age of Globalization*, Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2002.
- 34 Muqtedar Khan, 'Constructing the American Muslim Community', in Y. Hadad, J. Smith and J. Esposito (eds), *Religion and Immigration*, Walnut Creek, Calif.: Altamira Press, 2003.
- 35 Saeed, 'Muslims in the West'.
- 36 Ramadan, *To Be a European Muslim*, pp. 162–73.
- 37 Ibid, p. 171.
- 38 Ibid.

3 Islam and cultural modernity

In pursuit of democratic pluralism in Asia

Bassam Tibi

When it comes to thinking and practising pluralism in Southeast Asia, the native Muslim population is, comparatively speaking, as much challenged as are those Muslims migrating to Europe, now creating a great and growing segment of the population. The issue is to find ways for living in peace and harmony on the basis of equality with communities of other faiths.¹ There are Muslims who refuse to acknowledge this challenge, by stating that Islam has always been able to live with others in peace and harmony. They stop short of mentioning equality. Islamic Spain (*al-Andalus*) and southeast Europe under Ottoman Islamic rule are often referred to as supporting examples for this Islamic claim for pluralism. These cases are, however, by modern standards to be rejected as a model for Asia. It is for the sake of peace and interfaith harmony that one needs to address this issue in a plain language beyond political correctness. The Islamic doctrine of the *dhimmi* (protected communities subjected to Islamic rule – given exclusively to Christians and Jews) runs counter to a true pluralism. The coexistence of Muslims with people of other faiths in *al-Andalus* and in Ottoman south-east Europe took place under the rule of Islam and of its claim for supremacy (*Siyadat al-Islam*). Today this is no longer acceptable.

With reference to cultural modernity,² it is suggested in this paper that religious and cultural pluralism is to be understood as acknowledging the legitimate existence of the other under conditions of equality. This is seen as the better model in our time for the protection of peace and harmony among various religious communities. Such a formula was implicit in the civil-society-based call for setting up a 'statutory interfaith body of an advisory, consultative and conciliatory nature' in Malaysia.³ This call was followed by a two-day national conference on this matter in Kuala Lumpur in February 2005. Unfortunately, this effort was both condemned and boycotted by the leaders of the Islamic community, which claims to make up 60 per cent of the population. The Malaysian *ulama* refused this concept, because it was 'perceived as too strong a challenge to Islam's status within the Malaysian state', i.e., to Islam's primacy. Malaysia's Deputy Prime Minister insisted 'that Muslim religious sensitivities should be considered'. One is inclined to ask: and what about the sensitivities of the others who do not want to be *dhimmis*, but equals?

This story refers to a pertinent issue debated in the academic literature: the potential for and the feasibility of a new post-bipolar world order based on the Kantian concept of democratic perpetual peace, which presupposes the acceptance of pluralism. This vision cannot be accomplished without Islamic participation. The success of the project of interfaith harmony and peace requires not only an acceptance of democratic pluralism as legitimate by the people of the Islamic civilisation, but also that Muslims and non-Muslims share a feeling of belonging to the same community. The concept of pluralism⁴ cannot be accepted by Muslims if the local-cultural and civilisational roots for it are lacking. One needs to state with candour that pluralistic democracy runs counter to the Islamic view that other faiths should live under Islamic rule and its supremacy. The reference to 'Islamic sensitivities' in Malaysia is an example of censorship, preventing a free academic debate on Islam and political legitimacy in Asia in the spirit of democratic pluralism.

The overall predicament of Islam in relation to cultural modernity is the thematic core issue for this chapter's theoretical approach to democratic pluralism in Asia. It looks at religion in general and how it can undergo change under conditions of globalisation. Within this framework, it is asked how religion can adapt to pluralistic-democratic needs in the twenty-first century. A post-bipolar order cannot be accomplished if religious and cultural pluralism is not accepted as its foundation. In this context, one needs to rethink the concept of the *umma* instead of reimagining it.⁵ In the dialogue between civilisations, these issues need to be addressed with candour.⁶

Introduction: the inquiry

The argument that some Islamic doctrines are not consonant with pluralism does not suggest 'a clash', since it is supposed that accommodation is possible. In fact, pluralism is in its origin a political concept of a multi-party system which presupposes the combination of diversity with the acceptance of core values to be shared by all actors. Pluralism ought not to be confused with relativism, because it combines diversity with binding values and rules valid for any interaction. At the top of these principles is the equality of the players themselves, recognising each other mutually in their interaction. The application of this concept of political pluralism (diversity, plus a basic consensus) to religion, culture and ethnicity under conditions of globalisation and the related global migration is recent and equally connected with considerable problems. In political life, the culture of democratic pluralism based on the concept of the equality of others goes far beyond toleration or simple respect, as this is provided by Islam to the *dhimmis*, i.e., protected minorities.⁷

This chapter applies political-pluralistic thinking to culture and religion. In so doing, one encounters two kinds of problems: general, in combining any religion with pluralism, and specific when it comes to Islam in Asia.

One problem of a general nature is that religion is not only a cultural system in the Geertzian sense, but also a source of meaning intrinsically attached to an exclusive belief system viewed by its believers to be the sole truth. This means that every religion views itself to be absolute in its nature, validity and claims. In this understanding, no community committed to a religion-based culture can interact without problems with any other community founded on similar lines in the way political parties interact with one another in a system of parliamentary democratic pluralism. Therefore, there are obstacles on the way to establish a religious pluralism in Islamic thought.

Islam is the foremost form of absolutism, because it considers itself as the 'final religion.' This view runs counter to the substance of pluralism. Islam is not only a religion for the community of Muslim believers but for the entire humanity. In this case, a belief system is related to a universal worldview. Here we encounter the combination of religious absolutism, i.e., the claim to be the sole truth, with universalism, i.e., the claim to be valid for the entire humanity. Despite its claim to be above local cultures, the worldwide spread of Islam never abandoned its nature as a religion emanating from an Arab environment. The problem of Islamic Salafist orthodoxy is that it presents itself in an essentialist manner contending that Islam is above space and time. In addition to the problem of dealing with non-Muslims, we also have the problem of inner-Islamic diversity, which requires another pattern of pluralism. In the course of history, Islam succeeded in spreading and establishing itself through *jihad* combined with collective migration (*hijra*), but also peacefully through proselytisation (*da'wa*). Thus, Islam exists in religious and cultural terms in many non-Arab environments across the world. Nevertheless, the spread of Islam beyond Arabia into Asia did not alter its Arabo-centric character on the dogmatic-scriptural level as maintained by Salafism. In mapping the Southeast Asian archipelago, facts emerged that are contradictory to this orthodox Islamic view. The demographically greatest nation of Islam today is Indonesia, a non-Arab country with its own cultural tradition. In view of this, it is asked, 'Why does the Arab world continue to be the cultural core of the Islamic civilisation?' The implications involved are based on empirical grounds and are not simply the reflection of Arabo-centric bias. In fact, there is a conflict in Asia itself between local folk and scriptural Arab Islam. People of local cultures in Asia adopted Islam, but then Islam combined this universal belief with their local cultural environment. Who has the authority to decide how far this is acceptable?

In Cairo, in 1979, the then Indonesian Minister of Religious Affairs, Mukti Ali, presented to an Arab audience the pattern based on *adat* (local culture) of his country as the Indonesian variety of Islam. Many of the al-Azhar professors present did not like this view. They accused the speaker of 'deviation' and dismissed his variety of Islam as not authentic. Mukti Ali responded nicely to the question, 'Are you a Muslim in the understanding

of one comprehensive Islam or are you just an Indonesian', by stating: 'I am an Indonesian Muslim'.⁸ The Arabo-centric rejection of an Indonesian Islam is not restricted to a simple point of view expressed at an event; it is a mindset.

A quarter of a century later, I myself witnessed, while teaching at the Islamic University of Jakarta, how this Sunni-Arab version of Islam is being pushed forward through political action in the guise of educational channels. Throughout Indonesia, Arab, mostly Wahhabi preachers are involved in the promotion of Salafist Islam as a political action of indoctrination and shariahtisation. Those people are conveying the message to Indonesians that their understanding of Islam, which is based on their *adat*, is 'wrong', because it is not in line with the general scriptural provisions of Islam. If Westerners acted in the same manner vis-à-vis others, they would rightly be accused of cultural imperialism, or even racism. I find myself in agreement with the late Ernest Gellner⁹ who rightly criticised those Western cultural relativists who condemned European universalism while overlooking the absolutism of the others. In the context of neo-absolutism and cultural relativism the limits of pluralism become obvious.¹⁰

The issues and the constraints

The Muslims who essentialise Islam do not tolerate any criticism, while in the West, there are students of Islam who accuse critical reasoning of being Orientalist, making a caricature of Edward Said's once justified critique. In dealing with cultural impediments to the democratisation of Asia, one needs to go beyond these biases. For the present inquiry, an uncensored rethinking of Islam is a precondition for the pursuit of overcoming existing dilemmas. Integration of the people of Islam in a pluralistic world requires from them abandoning the mindset based on the religious claim to 'supremacy' (*ghalab*, al-Afghani) as expressed in a recent formula '*al-Islam ya'lu wa la yu'la alayhi*' (Islam is superior and nothing can be above it). This formula was presented by the heir of Hassan al-Banna, the Swiss Tareq Ramadan, to his audience in Indonesia, as I was informed in Jakarta during a lecture held at the Mohammadiyah. In venturing on a 'rethinking of Islam' (*Arkoun*) the target is putting Islam in harmony with pluralism. In short, a synthesis of Islam and pluralism requires an honest will to rethink Islamic inherited concepts considered essential and then to engage oneself in related cultural change and religious reform.

These requirements addressed are not fulfilled in the effort undertaken by the Iranian scholar Sachedina to think 'pluralism' in Islamic terms.¹¹ He bypasses the issues instead of addressing them with candour and remains confined to an apologetic approach. Reformist thinking such as that suggested by the Sudanese Muslim scholar Abdullahi An-Na'im is turned down as 'untenable'. Sachedina dismisses the complaints of non-Muslims no longer willing to be treated as a *dhimmi* subject. The Egyptian Jewish

scholar Bat Ye'or's criticism is misrepresented as Islamophobic by Sachedina who wrongly alleges that in Islam the entire humanity (*nas*) is one *umma* constructed along pluralistic lines.¹²

In contrast to this claim, Muslims are addressed in the Qur'an as the '*khair umma*' (best *umma*) among humanity (*al-nas*). Thus, the *umma* is an exclusively Islamic community of Muslims considered superior to others. In religious pluralism, one cannot accept the Muslim image of themselves of being superior to *al-nas*, i.e., to the rest of humanity. There is a need to rethink this perception of the self by Muslims. Pluralism presupposes equality. This is the bottom line. It would be dishonest to overlook Islamic views contrary to the basics of democratic pluralism. If these issues are not addressed, no obstacles can be seriously dealt with. What Muslims need to accept is the very principle of equality of the others. There are obstacles to be acknowledged. The hegemony of the West is only one of the obstacles. There are others generated by Muslims themselves. The opposite approaches of Orientalism and Islamophobia seek the flaws in the other and overlook the self.

Although diversity is a reality in most Islamic societies, this reality is denied by the doctrine of the cohesive *umma*. The requirement of relating diversity to pluralism has been in a way accomplished by the Indonesian experience. At least in principle, the Indonesian concept of *pancasila* acknowledges two accomplishments: First, the equality of non-Muslims with Muslims within a pluralistic framework; and, second, a broad range of world religions (Hinduism, Buddhism) equal to one another even beyond the inherited monotheist confines. Of course, there is still discrimination and assaults by Islamic *jihadists* on Indonesian Christians. To varying degrees, a political culture of pluralism has failed to match the existing diversity in Asia from its south-east to its west.

Throughout Islamic Asia, it is possible to identify three levels of relevance of the present inquiry:

1. *Globally*, in the post-bipolar development of the present world order, one faces a questioning based on the Westphalian synthesis of secular and sovereign states. Political Islam is one of the major sources of this challenge.¹³ This call is not merely the 'misuse of religion by a vocal minority',¹⁴ but rather a popular public choice that enjoys a tremendous appeal in the contemporary world of Islam, as well as in its diaspora. If one fails to acknowledge the power of this appeal one would not be in a position to seriously engage in a debate on pluralism. World peace can only be achieved with a pluralistic legitimacy that an apologetic approach in Islamic thought cannot deliver.
2. *Locally*, the same issue applies to Asian countries with non-Islamic minorities (Indonesia), or in reverse to states with Islamic minorities (India), or those with a considerable non-Muslim segment of the population (Malaysia). In the societies of all these Asian countries, a religious

acceptance of pluralistic thinking to determine the political culture is a precondition for peace. A civil society in these cases requires a civil Islam which can only thrive in a civilianised state. Only under such conditions of pluralistic society can Muslims and non-Muslims live in peace with one another while acknowledging the equality of the other, which implies equal rights.

3. Also on the local level, the problem of minority–majority occurs within the Islamic community itself. There exists an inner-Islamic problem related to the religious differentiation within Islam itself. This can be illustrated in the case of a major Asian country, Pakistan. Despite essentialist claims, there is no single monolithic Islam, because cultural and religious differentiations develop in the course of history. The results can be found within the Islamic community itself. Under the conditions of this diversity, inner-Islamic differentiations (e.g., Sunna vs. Shi'a) evolve to form a division if pluralistic culture is lacking. Therefore, there is a need for pluralism not only to promote peace between Muslims and others, be it globally or locally, but also within Islam itself. The repeated Sunni assaults on the Shi'i minority in Pakistan, and the Shi'i retaliations indicate the lack of a political culture of pluralism within Islamic civilisation itself. This also applies to the discrimination against other non-Sunni-Muslims, such as the Ahmadiyya in Pakistan and non-Shi'i Muslims, as the Baha'is in Iran or the Alewives of Turkey. The foremost and topical case in point for the Sunni-Shi'i tensions is in West Asia. The undermining of the democratisation of Iraq by Sunni *jihadists* killing Shi'i Iraqis en masse is one of the most disturbing effects of the lack of pluralism.

On all of these levels involving the lack of a culture of democratic pluralism, one observes an insistence on universal Islamic concepts. It is claimed that these are based on a shariah valid for the entire humanity and considered to lie above time and space. The result is conflict and disorder, since non-Muslims in Asia and elsewhere in the world would not succumb to the claims currently articulated by universalist political Islam, whether in its *jihadist* variety (e.g., al-Qaida) or its peaceful-institutional representatives (e.g., AKP in Turkey).

For the sake of external and internal peace in Asia at large, a quest for democratic pluralism in Islamic civilisation is needed. It has to be based on an Islamic perspective to have sufficient Islamic legitimacy to ensure its acceptance. This is not an easy task because traditional Islamic thinking often stumbles on non-Islamic pluralistic concepts. No problem can be solved if the underlying issue is evaded. This is Islam's predicament in relation to modernity.

There are some Islamic foundations for a pluralistic thinking in the Qur'an, which teaches us to honour diversity: 'and we have created you... and divided you into peoples and tribes that you might get to know (interact

with) one another' (*al-Hujrat* 49:13). This diversity is not attached to a higher ranking of Muslims vis-à-vis non-Muslims, and one may be inclined to read an acceptance of pluralism into it. In addition, we read in the *hadith* of the Prophet the statement that, '*al-ikhtilafu fi ummati rahma*' (Difference in my *umma* is a sign of mercy).

Yet the normative approach underlying these provisions has never been reflected in Islamic realities. Therefore, a scriptural approach for dealing with realities is not very promising for our inquiry. To set the terms clearly: pluralism viewed as part of the needed 'civil Islam' requires for its establishment the realisation of two conditions:

1. The cultural underpinning, a political legitimacy for a culture of pluralism.
2. The institutional underpinning, a safeguard through the institutions of a civil society to protect the rules of this culture.¹⁵

In line with the above quotes from Holy Scripture, one could argue for an open-minded interpretation of Islamic sources. This could lay down the grounds for an Islamic embracing of this pattern of political as well as cultural and religious pluralism, but it is – as a scriptural approach – limited in its character and therefore not sufficient for further pursuit. Muslims need to engage in more and to be daring in their reasoning. In Islam, free reasoning as real *ijtihad* is permitted. Therefore, an Islamic reasoning on cultural and religious pluralism that presupposes the full equality of other religious and cultural communities is needed.

The vision of mapping the globe along the lines of one universally valid model, be it a Pax Americana or a Pax Islamica, needs to be abandoned in favour of a culture of pluralism that admits and protects diversity on the basis of shared core values. Those Muslims reinterpreting the concept of *jihad* in a new ill-minded manner to legitimate their resort to violence are clearly in conflict with the ideas of pluralism and democratic peace. At issue is a conflict within the Islamic community and also with regard to Islam's relationship to others in the world at large. To be sure, well-educated Muslims will find in neither the Qur'an nor the *hadith* the term 'state' (*dawla*) or 'order' (*nizam*), or any similar concept. If we talk about Islamic governance, then, it cannot mean any particular system of government to emulate, but only a matter of developing Islamic political ethics.¹⁶

The potential in such ethics for the admission of pluralism in Islamic civilisation can be guided by the ethical norm included in the Qur'an: '*Lakum dinakum wa liya din*' (You have your religion and I have mine). This insight should be the point of departure for dialogue, first among Muslims themselves for dealing with inner-Islamic discord resulting from the lack of acceptance of inner-Islamic diversity and then between Islam and other civilisations to prevent the clash of civilisations as a conflict between rival *Weltanschauungen* in the ongoing 'war of ideas'. In my view, neither the universal claims of an American model nor an Iranian one are appropriate for

Asia. Each country must be granted its own specific model, based on the general acceptance of pluralism and its core values, to be locally legitimated by different varieties of a civil Islam. This would be the balance between local Islam and universal pluralism. In clarifying the concept, one needs to refer to two intertwined meanings of pluralism that cannot be separated from each another: *diversity* and, at the same time, a *consent* to basic values and rules to be shared cross-culturally. It is possible to establish legitimacy for democracy and pluralism and to endorse local cultures at the same time. This is no contradiction.

Some Muslims have rejected the whole concept of civil society, including the Turkish scholar Şerif Mardin: 'Civil society is a Western model... a part of the social history of Western Europe... civil society... does not translate into Islamic terms.'¹⁷

Of course, there are other Islamic views on this subject.¹⁸ Now, as already argued, the issue is not whether or not a democratic civil society intellectually translates into Islam but that the protection of the idea of freedom needs an institutional safeguard. Some Muslims see freedom as the hub of Islamic morality expressed by the formula 'an Islam of freedom, not an Islam of despotism.'¹⁹ Others concede that this concept was never practised in Islamic history.²⁰ The basic reason was the lack of institutions for boosting the qur'anic idea of freedom, since power in Islamic history has been personal, not institutional. The right order was always considered to be only guaranteed by the pious person of an '*Imam adil*' (just leader), in contrast to an impious '*Imam jou'ir*' (unjust leader).²¹ This thinking indicates a personalisation of power and gives institutions almost no place in state and society.

Throughout their history, Muslims were guided by their yearning for the rule of an *Imam adil* in the footsteps of the Prophet and thus ignored the need for institutions that safeguarded freedom. The order of the caliphate was based on the person of the caliph, not on established rules nor on institutions to safeguard Islamic principles. This explains why the Islamic ideal of a just *imam* never materialised in the societies of Islam. The first four caliphs of Islam are revered by Muslims as 'righteous' (*rashidun*), but three of them were assassinated by Muslims themselves. This is no indication of pluralism, rather the contrary. Disagreement was regarded as *fitna* and frequently led to internal wars. The foremost medieval *faqih* (sacral jurist), Ibn Taimiyya, argued that an unjust *imam* was better than disorder. This is a burdening legacy difficult for Western policy-makers to grasp, and has become topical after the war in Iraq. For some Iraqis, Saddam's 'Republic of Fear' was better than the disorder that followed his toppling.

Cross-cultural fertilisation and the need for 'rethinking Islam'

At the core of the debate on Islam, democratic legitimacy and pluralism is a post-bipolar development for transnational religions moving to the centre

stage of world politics. The debate cannot be properly addressed without reference to the return of the sacred in a political garb. In our case, it is not political Islam, but cultural reforms that are the avenue for dealing with the challenge of democratisation.

The insight that culture matters for understanding development in general and for the unfolding of a political legitimacy for pluralism in Islamic Asia in particular makes all references to globalisation highly relative. Cultural change is a precondition to a promising political change. One can never repeat enough the qur'anic provision 'God does not change people unless they change themselves' (13:11). Unless cultural attitudes change, no positive development could be in sight. The required rethinking presupposes this change. An orthodox unreformed Islam could never lead to democracy, only a reformed Islam could deliver.

In the age of identity politics and cultural authenticity, one of the obstacles standing in the way is the rejection of learning from others. The fact that democratic pluralism is considered in the world of Islam to be Western in origin is combined with anti-Western attitudes which lead to its rejection. Although Samuel Huntington's views have provoked a reaction against the concept of 'civilisation', every civilisation does in fact have its own values and worldviews.²² Though Huntington seems unaware of the fact, the notion of civilisation was first elaborated upon by a Muslim philosopher, the great Ibn Khaldun of the fourteenth century. The attack on the whole notion of civilisation along with the rejection of Huntington comes from those Westerners preoccupied with 'Orientalism', not from Muslims themselves. Pluralism requires a combining of the acceptance of diversity with the sharing of a cross-cultural morality (norms, values, rules). If a clash between and within civilisations prevails, then no cultural borrowing can be accomplished and the goal cannot be reached. A rethinking of Islam for overcoming the predicament requires cultural borrowing and reform.

Long before Huntington, the precursors of political Islam, led by Sayyid Qutb, were describing the conflict between Islam and the West in civilisational terms with the aim of rejecting any cultural borrowing. The influential contemporary Islamist Yusuf al-Qaradawi, the heir of Qutb though mistakenly classified by some Western Orientalists as a voice of 'liberal Islam', flatly dismisses democracy as un-Islamic and therefore to be rejected. Qaradawi invented the formula *al-hall al-Islami* (the Islamic solution), as opposed to *al-hulul al-mustawradah* (the imported solutions) among which he lists democracy.²³ The Greek origins of the idea of democracy lead Qaradawi to conclude that it is alien to Islam. This justification is utterly wrong. Students of Islam are familiar with the process of Hellenisation of Islam which contributed to the thriving of its civilisation.²⁴ Democracy should not be dismissed as an import to Islam from the West but embraced in the framework of cross-cultural interfertilisation well known to open-minded Muslims in the present as in the past.

Political Islam shares with Huntington the idea of civilisational incompatibility. The contemporary Muslim philosopher Sadik J. al-Azm has criticised Edward Said and his followers for reversing the thinking of Western Orientalists and encouraging a Middle Eastern 'Orientalism in reverse'.²⁵ The Islamic reformer al-Ashmawi was not in an ironic mood when he argued: 'L'Islamisme contre l' Islam'.²⁶

The Prophet's saying, '*Utlubu al-Ilm wa law fi al-sein*' (Seek for knowledge even in China), smoothes the way for learning from other cultures. This is the spirit of an open Islam which gives an Islamic legitimisation for looking at knowledge in a rational manner. Muslim philosophers in the classical age of Islam also had positive attitudes towards the Greek legacy. Aristotle was named by these philosophers the '*Mu'allim al-Awwal*' (First Master), whereas the most significant Muslim philosopher, al-Farabi, was ranked second, as *al-Mu'allim al-Thani*.²⁷ I argue that rationality implies a knowledge separated from religion in that it is reason-based. The current Islamist claim for the Islamisation of knowledge²⁸ is not only misleading, but also detrimental to the future of Muslim people, because it separates them from the rest of humanity and closes the door to learning from others. For the civilisation of Islam, this Islamist drive creates a major obstacle in the way of embracing cultural modernity.

For Asia in particular, a democratic civil Islam is imperative.²⁹ Only this type of open Islam could prevent fragmentation. The 'fault-lines' between Islam and the 'others' are inner-Asian, not only Western-Islamic. The need for pluralism is, therefore, an Asian need. Nevertheless, it was an Indian Muslim, the late Abu al-A'la al-Mawdudi, who made one of the most determined attacks against democratic pluralism in his book *Islam and Modern Civilization*:

'I tell you, my fellow Muslims, frankly: Democracy is in contradiction with your belief... Islam, in which you believe,... is utterly different from this dreadful system... There can be no reconciliation between Islam and democracy, not even in minor issues, because they contradict one another in all terms. Where this system [democracy] exists we consider Islam to be absent. When Islam comes to power there is no place for this system.'³⁰

The quote expresses the mindset of incompatibility between Islam and democracy and rejects any political legitimacy for a pluralism. Is this mindset the explanation why the Muslim world lags behind the global third wave of democratisation? To defuse this Islamist sentiment, one needs to argue for a harmony between Islam and democracy and to embrace the open-minded heritage of medieval history vis-à-vis other civilisations.³¹ One must be careful to maintain the distinction between Islam and Islamism, unlike the philo-Islamic Americans, John Esposito and John Voll.³² Islam can be accommodated to a thinking in pluralistic democracy, but Islamism

definitely can not. In my view, Islamism is a threat both to Islamic and international security.³³ It creates disorder in world politics. The dismissal of the need of Muslims to globally and locally embrace pluralism is detrimental to inner and external peace in the parts of Asia inhabited by Muslim peoples. Generally, Islamism is based on a politicisation of Islam and its shariahtisation. In Asia and elsewhere, this political Islam, as an Islamic variety of the global phenomenon of religious fundamentalism,³⁴ is closing the door for a fruitful dealing with the challenge of modernity and the predicament with pluralistic democracy. It follows that Islamism has been exacerbating the problem through its spread. I do not believe in 'democratic Islamism', as some suggest. In fact, the formula is a contradiction in terms. In contrast, reform Islamic is compatible with democracy.

A pure secularism cannot be the target; it has failed, and the lesson for Asia is that the task of democratisation cannot be accomplished without Islam as a source of legitimacy. However, the totalising shariah and the concept of a totalitarian Islamic state are not this legitimacy. The issue is political ethics. The worldview of Islamic unity cultivated in terms of *Weltanschauung* needs, therefore, to be changed. The reality of Islamic diversity in terms of local cultures exists simultaneously next to the belief in unity of the *umma* addressed as a holistic Islamic civilisation. The current variety of the claims to an *umma* unity included in the worldview is artificial, only sustained through a constructed polarisation of Islam versus the West. Even though I discard this polarisation, I do not overlook the competing universalisms, the one of the West and the other of the world of Islam. Under specific conditions, they clash with one another. The outcome is a conflict promoted through globalisation and the ascendance of transnational religions in world politics. Unlike Huntington, however, I argue that this conflict can be solved peacefully. Despite all odds, pluralism is essential both for world peace and for peace within the very diverse Islamic civilisation itself. This can be achieved through a cross-cultural consensus over a common core of ethical values. The envisioned consensus can unite – under the premise of pluralism – this very humanity for the sake of a democratic peace. Definitely, the concept of democratic pluralism is in conflict with the concept of Islamic peace based on the belief and the utopia of uniting humanity under Islamic rule as a *dar al-islam* mapping the entire globe. If Muslims fail to rid themselves of this concept, bloody conflicts cannot be averted, between civilisations, within the world of Islam, and between Muslims and non-Muslims (majority–minority) within one state. Thus, the predicament with modernity is not only an intellectual issue, it is also political. A political culture of pluralism based on shared rules for peaceful conflict resolution provides mechanisms for dealing with discord. No single religion can provide rules acceptable for the whole of humanity. Nevertheless, religion is needed for legitimacy, and this need can be restricted to the ethical level.

In Asia, one finds ethnic nationalisms and religious fundamentalisms among the enemies of pluralism. Regrettably, these divisive ideologies

successfully promote the fault-lines in Asian societies and within humanity. Against these obstacles, an unfolding of a political legitimacy furthering an embracing of the universality of pluralism and democracy is needed for a promising future for Asia. Within the framework of such an endeavour, an innovative understanding of Islam could contribute to incorporating the Muslims of Asia into a process of democratisation of the continent. This would be a step towards democratic peace based on the premise that participating states acknowledge differences and recognise pluralism, because then they are in a position to resolve their conflicts peacefully through negotiations. In the light of this argument, democratic pluralism – in terms of values and the supporting institutions – would be a contribution to peace within Asia and also among divergent civilisations.

In summing up the analyses pursued in this section on political legitimacy in Islamic Asia, it can be stated that the search for a religious legitimisation of political rule in the name of Islam often runs counter to pluralism and reflects a predicament Islam has with modernity, of which pluralism is an essential part. The call for an Islamic legitimisation of politics could be placed in the service of democratic pluralism, or it could reflect exactly the reverse. In a positive sense, an accommodation of Islam to democratic pluralism to the extent of unfolding a civil Islam is an undertaking related to serious problems. If Islam's predicament with regard to modernity is addressed, then deliberations for overcoming it are within reach.

The present inquiry operates on the assumption that it is fruitless to restrict the issue to a scriptural level. We need to deal with real Islam in the Durkheimian sense of a *fait social*, i.e., of social realities, and also to place it in a historical perspective.³⁵ The endeavour to 'rethinking Islam'³⁴ in the pursuit of democratic pluralism with a political legitimisation acceptable to Muslims is the centrepiece. It is argued that a successful introduction of pluralistic democracy requires a cultural underpinning. For providing this, a scriptural undertaking is insufficient. Such an endeavour could result in the reverse as for example those who refuse democracy as alien to Islam and view *shura* as an Islamic substitute for democracy, but fail to address real issues. In contrast, the apologetic argument that democracy essentially exists in Islamic doctrine is contested, because democratic pluralism is modern and it is a recent addition to Islamic thought, yet not well accommodated. Therefore, the quest for democratic pluralism in Islamic Asia creates a challenge and is a contemporary issue.

Maintaining authenticity while learning from others

Without the needed rethinking of Islam, there can be no accommodation to pluralism and democratic peace. Political Islam fails to meet this challenge. Without an Islamic legitimacy for a democratic pluralism there can be no political, religious and cultural underpinning for Muslims in Asia for joining democratic world peace. For this reason, the rejection of democracy by

political Islamists is to be taken most seriously. In contrast to popular sovereignty, they construct God's sovereignty applied to politics. The model they present as an alternative to democracy is '*Hakimiyyat Allah*' (God's rule) as a legitimisation for their call for a shariah-based totalising 'Islamic state' to be achieved through *jihad*.³⁶ Our topic in this section is authenticity and democracy. The related questions to be asked are: Do Islamist views on democracy really reflect authentic Islamic political views? How much appeal do they enjoy in Asia?³⁷ Is it true that Islam and democracy are 'a contradiction in all terms' as Mawdudi contends? And, last but not least, Why can contemporary Muslims not emulate their ancestors of classical Islam in learning from others?

Some of the cases examined in this book are instructive. India, as a secular state with the largest Islamic minority (c. 130 million) in the world, is, on the one hand, an example for fairly peaceful, if troubled, coexistence of people belonging to diverse religions under secular democracy as a common umbrella. On the other hand, India is a flawed democracy because it is weak, and not based on an overall accepted community. India could move into the 'coming anarchy' if this fragile secular set-up were to break down. Worse than India is the Islamic model of Pakistan, which is not even in a position to absorb and integrate the Sunni minority of Muhajirs, i.e., Indian Muslims who migrated after 1947 to southern Pakistan, not to speak of the Shi'a or Ahmadiyya minorities or even non-Muslims. Muslim migrants in the Christian countries of Europe, like Germany,³⁸ are treated much better than Muslim migrants to Islamic Pakistan. The reason is not Germany but the fact that Muslims in Europe enjoy the democratic freedom of a pluralistic open society. Europeans would be rightly accused of racism if they dared to behave in the manner Sunni Muslim Asians behave vis-à-vis others. In Indonesia we find a more promising case, of a more tolerant country where a relatively enlightened Islam is embracing democracy, despite all odds, as the best institutional guarantee of inter-ethnic and religious peace. Robert Hefner rightly addresses this variety in terms of a 'civil Islam' combined with secularity, providing legitimacy. Indonesia, with a population of 230 million, not only constitutes the largest Islamic nation in the world, but also – despite periodic assaults on non-Muslims – a better place for Muslims and non-Muslims to live with one another than Pakistan or Iran.

In so stating, I do not overlook the existing tensions, nor the dreadful assaults on Christians and Chinese. One source of evil inciting these tensions is the fact that the Arab world (e.g., Wahhabi Saudi Arabia), being culturally the centre of the Islamic civilisation, continues to generate effects throughout the Islamic civilisation. Among these effects is the export of a Salafist and an Islamist Islam to Indonesia. An expert on Indonesia, von der Mehden, subjected the interaction between Southeast Asia and the Arab Middle East, to a closer scrutiny:

Middle Eastern religious ideas still dominate the exchange between the two regions. There is relatively little influence by Southeast Asian

Muslim intellectuals on the rest of the Muslim world... Religious education in the Middle East, and in Cairo in particular, remains a major source of Muslim thought in Southeast Asia, especially in Indonesia.³⁹

It follows that Indonesia is reduced to a periphery and has too little impact on the rest of the world of Islam. This saddening conclusion requires some attention, even in this book, on West Asia, which still dominates the Islamic civilisation.

The fact that democratic pluralism and the vision of a democratic peace are European concepts in origin creates a problem in learning from others in the search for legitimacy for these concepts. Islam as an Arab religion is itself foreign to non-Arab Asia. Therefore, there is a difference in the attitudes between Arabs and non-Arab Asians when it comes to learning from others. More than in Southeast Asia, we see in the Arab cultural core of the Islamic civilisation preoccupation with *asalah* (authenticity). This preoccupation creates great obstacles in the way of learning and adopting innovations from others. Many contemporary Arab and Iranian Muslims believe they need no Western model of democracy and dismiss this adopted model as an 'imported solution' contrasted with the Islamic *hall* (solution) for which they either refer to the Islamic *shura* (consultation) as provisioned in the Qur'an, or flatly reject democracy altogether.

In this debate, there is the need to reiterate the fact that democracy and pluralism have neither Islamic nor Christian nor any other religious roots. They originated in Europe on secular grounds. Historical roots relate primarily to Hellenism. In the world of Islam democracy, there is a recent addition. The late Muslim Iranian Oxford scholar Hamid Enayat rightly argues that the Islamic awareness of this novelty continues to be both weak and blurred.⁴⁰

Muslims first encountered the new concept of democratic rule in the context of globalisation related to European expansion. The exposure of the Islamic civilisation to 'cultural modernity' in the course of the education of modern Muslim elites created a predicament. The first encounter was in the early liberal age in the Middle East, when an embracing of democracy and its reconciliation with Islam was still a recognised concern on the agenda. The first Muslim imam to go to Europe, Rifa'a Rafi' al-Tahtawi, who choose to be a student there, expressed his deep admiration of the French culture of democracy. He was to witness the July revolution in Paris in 1830 and was impressed to see the representatives of the toppled regime being granted basic human rights instead of being beaten and humiliated. For Imam Tahtawi, this was an evidence, 'for how civilized the French are and how their state is bound to justice.'⁴¹ Other early Muslim modernists and reformists became more critical of Europe due to its colonial incursions into the abode of Islam but continued to seek a reconciliation of Islam and cultural modernity. These liberals failed – as did Islamic reformers – because they evaded the basic issues (as shown in an early study by Safran).

Expressed in the language of this chapter, Muslim liberals and reformers lacked the courage to venture on a rethinking of Islam.

The Islamic liberalism⁴² of the early twentieth century waned in the wake of the emergence of radical-secular praetorianism (e.g., Nasserism) of the military seizing power in the state. In a row of continued failures, praetorian-minded innovations shared the same fate. The ensuing crisis of the secular nation-state not only contributed to the delegitimation of these praetorian regimes but also of the secular nation-state itself. The crisis paved the way for the emergence of political Islam (*al-Islam al-siyasi*) presenting itself as the solution (*al-Islam huwa al-hall*) (see Note 22), which was believed to be an exit from the crisis because it provided new legitimacy and radically different outlooks. In fact, this very political Islam gave a blow to liberal Islamic efforts⁴³ at harmonising Islam and democracy.

Despite the exception of the Indian precursor of political Islam, Mawdudi, this new direction has been primarily shaped by an Arab Islam. It was then exported to all other non-Arab parts of the continent. Ranking 'authenticity' much higher than learning from others, these contemporary Islamists no longer accepted the Islamic past of the medieval philosophers as a model for learning from others. A revival of this rationalist legacy would help in reversing recent developments. This revival could be put in the service of promoting a cultural underpinning for adopting pluralism and democracy. Thus, learning from others could also be combined with authentic local traditions.

The mediaeval Islamic philosophers fulfilled one of the conditions of Popper's 'open society'. Islamic rationalism of that period was a synthesis of the Greek legacy, later passed to Europe as one of the major sources of inspiration for the European Renaissance.⁴⁴ We should remind ourselves of the historical fact that the Renaissance is part of the very same legacy that grew from the interaction between Islam and Europe. A prominent theorist of civilisation, Leslie Lipson, notes the European debt to Hellenism via Islam: 'Aristotle crept back into Europe by the side door. His return was due to the Arabs, who had become acquainted with Greek thinkers... The main source of Europe's inspiration shifted from Christianity back to Greece, from Jerusalem to Athens.'⁴⁵ This very Greek legacy of the polis is the major source of democracy.

It is unfortunate that the Greek legacy, transmitted to Europe by Muslim philosophers, vanished in the world of Islam itself. In late medieval Islam, the rival Islamic orthodoxy gathered forces around the *fiqh*/Islamic sacral jurisprudence and contributed to the banning of rationalism from the institutions of learning.⁴⁶ On these grounds, the Islamic *fiqh* orthodoxy took over and superseded the Islamic rationalism of *falsafa*.⁴⁷ Efforts in contemporary Islamic history at reviving the tradition of Enlightenment and rationalism have not been very successful.⁴⁸ The Egyptian philosopher Murad Wahba speaks of a *Mufaraqat Ibn Rush* (the paradox of Averroes) by which he refers to the high tribute paid to this Muslim philosopher in the West while his books were burned in the world of Islam.⁴⁹

Early Muslim liberals were at pains to revive the positive legacy in Islamic history and to facilitate the adoption of the norms and values of democracy in an Islamic environment. Here again, I draw on the late Oxford Muslim scholar Hamid Enayat who explains the failure which was caused not so much 'by conceptual incoherence as by absence of specific social and economic formations.' In continuing this line of reasoning, Enayat argues that on domestic grounds the constraints were 'educational backwardness, widespread illiteracy, and the prevalence of servile habits of thinking and blind submission to authority'.⁵⁰ In addition to these major structural obstacles, there were, however, others on external grounds, such as unfavourable Western policies. In the present day, the normative obstacles, i.e., self-ghettoisation, are exacerbating this situation.

In dealing with these questions, I argue that there is no contradiction between authenticity and learning from others in the search of a cultural underpinning of democracy in our age of globalisation. There is one humanity subdivided into a variety of civilisations each characterised by inner cultural diversity. People of different religions in Asia can live up to this diversity in peace only within the framework of cultural and institutional pluralism. Only under the condition of democratising Asia⁵¹ can a democratic peace be in sight. It is possible that the world time of the second half of the twenty-first century will reflect an Asian age. Therefore, Asia matters most for putting Islam and democracy in harmony. In history, learning from others resulting in cross-cultural fertilisation was never a threat but a source for enriching humanity. Authenticity also matters in our post-bi-polar time of the cultural turn, and one needs to beware of its pitfalls. An exclusive insistence on authenticity could result in a mindset of a gated community in a global world with the consequence of entrenching the Islamic *umma* from the rest of humanity. In contrast, a revival of Islamic rationalism promises a better future.⁵²

A cultural synthesis of Islam and democracy

Among the needed religious reforms in Islam is a new definition for its relation to politics. The qur'anic idea of *shura* is not an underpinning for a system of government. For establishing pluralism and democracy in Islam, a new ethical approach is needed that is neither imposed nor scriptural. The spirit of Islamic ethics can be interpreted in line with the pursuit of a cross-cultural international morality. From this point of view, I fully share the enlightened position of Hamid Enayat that it is 'neither... inordinately difficult nor illegitimate to derive a list of democratic rights and liberties'⁵³ on an ethical level from Islamic sources in the spirit of an open Islam. However, a new reasoning and a rethinking of Islamic concepts must be admitted, going beyond scriptural and doctrinal confines. Otherwise, finding political legitimacy for pluralism and democracy in Islam is doomed to failure. Such new reasoning runs counter to the fundamentalist notion of

Hakimiyyat Allah and to Salafist doctrines as well. Establishing a legitimacy for pluralism could be viewed as *ijtihad* in the understanding of independent reasoning for the search for new knowledge. This *ijtihad* needs to be taken beyond lip-service. The distinction between normative Islam and Islam as a 'fait social' must determine the scope of analysis.

The Islamist call for an 'Islamic state' based on the shariah ends in an impasse for Muslim societies as much as does a Salafist approach that glorifies the past. The complementary call for *tatbiq al-shari'a* (implementation of Islamic law) is similarly misleading, by interpreting shariah law as a state law, which it is definitely not. Nevertheless, Islamists present their understanding of the shariah as authentic and as a criterion for determining the character of a *dawla Islamiyya* (Islamic state). The major arguments presented in the shariah should be confined to an Islamic ethics.

Religious and cultural reforms need to be engaged to meet the challenge. Enayat clearly addressed these issues:

What is blatantly missing... is an adaptation of either the ethical and legal precepts of Islam, or the attitudes and institutions of traditional society, to democracy. This is obviously a much more complex and challenging task than the mere reformulation of democratic principles in Islamic idioms. It is because of this neglect that the hopes of evolving a coherent theory of democracy appropriate to an Islamic context have remained largely unfulfilled.⁵⁴

Underpinning democracy and pluralism in purely dogmatic-scriptural terms is bound to fail. If the Qur'an is not read literally but rather as an ethical source, then it provides the spirit for an ethical embracing of democracy. Any effort to derive rules from divine revelation for the related governance would lead in the opposite direction, i.e., to reject democracy. Most approaches have been hitherto both selective and limited in their scope. Secularisation of politics⁵⁵ is, therefore, a requirement for overcoming the conflict between Islam and democracy in contemporary Islamic civilisation. It is wrong to maintain that secularisation is areligious because religious ethics are admitted, but not the notion of a divine order of the state propagated by Islamism naively presented by some US pundits as 'Islam without Fear'.⁵⁶ A reformed Islam is compatible with democracy, but not the Islamist variety of fundamentalism.⁵⁷

The correlation between civil Islam and a civilianised state

The combination of democratic institutions and a culture of democracy is the basic requirement for a pluralism on which a civil Islam in contrast to a shariahtised Islam could rest. A democratic institutionalised state is at odds with all kinds of patriarchy inherent in the idea of a shariah-based Islamic state.⁵⁸ Hefner rightly tells us that efforts for establishing a civil Islam are

insufficient if not accompanied by a process of institution building aimed at creating a civilianised state.⁵⁹ An innovative rethinking of Islam as discussed in the foregoing section does not suffice, even though it is the precondition for going beyond the traditionally inherited Muslim scripturalist thinking in conflict with pluralism.

In his remarkable book on civil Islam in Indonesia, Robert Hefner rightly states that 'democracy ultimately requires a public culture... to promote universal habits of participation and tolerance. This civic culture... the culture of civility remains vulnerable and incomplete, if not accompanied by a transformation of state.'⁶⁰ In considering these thoughts, one can state a lack throughout Islamic history of a democratic culture of *shura* as prescribed by the Qur'an, as well as of the right to *ikhtilaf* (difference) admitted by the Prophet.

Democracy is more promising than *jihad* for an envisioned Islamic world order.⁶¹ In this pursuit, the *first* task would be to establish a cross-cultural underpinning of democracy followed *secondly* by an institutional democratisation leading to a civilianised state. If successful, democracy and pluralism can be introduced into the Islamic civilisation on the grounds of a civil Islam combined with a civilianised state. This is a perspective for the Islamic parts of Asia that presupposes change in two major issue areas:

First, a change in political culture.⁶² In this field, most Islamic societies lack a development of favourable pluralistic attitudes towards democracy as a political culture in its own terms. This culture of a 'civil Islam' with citizenship being the bedrock of a democratic polity runs counter to the politically quasi-tribal or ethnic mindset of constructed collectivism. Loyalty to a clan or a sectarian or an ethnic group is not in line with a democratic polity.

Second, political development, in the sense of institution-building. In most Islamic societies, one observes, in varying degrees, low institutionalisation coinciding with a high degree of personalisation of power.⁶³ The burdening legacy related to this issue has deep cultural roots in Islam. In the established tradition, Muslims emulate the person of the Prophet and are less concerned with institutions. The model to emulate has been a leader of the *umma* as the right *imam*, not an institution.

Conclusions and future prospects

In view of the religious and cultural diversity of Asia, only a fully accepted religious and democratic pluralism, both as regards political culture and legitimacy in institutions, could safeguard inner peace. In the world of Islam, to which numerous societies in Asia belong, the existing multi-ethnic and multi-religious nation-states face a major problem: the lack of the basic elements needed to establish a democratically designed political community, both on the normative-cultural as well as on the institutional level. Unfortunately, Islam

recurring in a political shape is part of this problem. To be sure, this political Islam is not 'the solution' (*al-Qaradawi*), it leads to an impasse.⁶⁴

One of the major arguments presented in this chapter is Islam's predicament with regard to modernity,⁶⁵ which hampers democratisation. In the realities of Islamic societies in Asia, one observes fragmentation resulting from a religio-sectarian ethnic determination of communities as collective entities, rival to one another. Those divides contradict the concept of an overall entity of an Islamic civilisation based on the concept of the *umma*. These are real ethnic and sectarian subdivisions that can be accommodated to pluralism. On a social level, this needed culture of pluralism as well as nation-building and democratisation are impeded by structural constraints. On a normative level, the problem is the lack of a civil Islam and institutionally of a civilianised state.

Given the focus of this chapter on the normative level, the basic argument has been that the lack of the cultural underpinning as well as of the proper institutions needed for establishing democracy and pluralism are a real concern for the future of Islam in Asia. The existing nominal nation-states in most countries of the Islamic civilisation explain the persistence of the ethnic-tribal and sectarian culture and therefore the lack of good governance.⁶⁶ These are the realities to be faced when democratic pluralism is called for. The prevailing political culture creates great obstacles to the introduction of pluralism, democracy and of the related institutions. The Western concept of democratisation has to be adjusted to an appropriate understanding of culturally different conditions and supplemented with the proper institutions for good governance.

Educating in democratic pluralism⁶⁷ is a difficult task in an age of Islamism, but it is a precondition for a political culture with a political legitimacy for this pluralistic model of power-sharing between Muslims divided themselves by ethnicity and sect, and also divided from non-Muslims living in the same state. Ethno-sectarian power sharing and democratic pluralism require from Muslims to stop looking at non-Muslim as *dhimmis*, not to speak of looking at non-Muslim territorialities as *dar al-harb* inhabited by *kuffar* (unbelievers). The rest of humanity needs to be recognised within a pluralism admitted by a new thinking of Islam in Asia. For this pursuit, neither Islamist Iran⁶⁸ nor Wahhabi Islam⁶⁹ provides the needed model, but rather the 'civil Islam' which was unfolding in Indonesia but which was suffocated by the authoritarian state and equally by political Islam imported from the Middle East. Islam matters as a civilisation and politics for the future of Asia.⁷⁰

Acknowledgement

The research needed for the completion of this paper was conducted within the framework of an appointment as Visiting Scholar at Harvard 2004/5, and it was continued in Singapore at NUS where I was appointed Senior

Research Fellow. This fellowship was provided in 2005 by ARI where a draft of this paper was completed at ARI in spring 2005 and presented in April to the ARI conference on Political Legitimacy in Islamic Asia. This final version was completed at Cornell University, September 2005 during my Cornell tenure as A.D. White Professor-at-Large.

Notes

- 1 In a democracy the classification of non-Muslims by Muslims within the framework of dhimmitude is not acceptable (see note 7). Democracy in Asia was the topic of a Belgian–Japanese project under the chair of M. Schmiegelow (ed.) *Democracy in Asia*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997, a volume which includes my chapter on 'Democracy and Islam in Asia', pp. 127–46. The project was run at the Institute for Asian Studies at the Université Catholique de Louvain, Belgium. For the situation of Muslims as a minority in Europe providing a comparative case see B. Tibi, 'Muslim Migrants in Europe: Between Euro-Islam and Ghettoization', in Nezar AlSayyad and M. Castells (eds), *Muslim Europe or Euro-Islam: Politics, Culture and Citizenship in the Age of Globalization*, Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2002, pp. 31–52.
- 2 J. Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1986.
- 3 All the following references to this call are based on the report by Ooi Kee Beng, 'Interfaith Dialogue Need not be Destabilizing,' *The Straits Times*, 3 March 2005, p. 28 (Section Review).
- 4 On the concept of pluralism see J. Kekes, *The Morality of Pluralism*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993. On democratic peace, see the seminal work by B. Russett, *Grasping Democratic Peace: Principles for Post-Cold War World*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press 1993, and M. Brown, S.M. Lynn-Jones and S.E. Miller, *Debating Democratic Peace* Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996.
- 5 See B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, London: New Vero Edition, 1991, in particular pp. 9–36. Without a reference to Anderson, the distinguished German scholar of Islam Josef van Ess maintains that the self-image of Muslims as an *umma* community never had in the formative early years of Islam the significant meaning it has in our present, say as an 'imagined community.'
- 6 See the proceedings of the Indonesian project: K. Helmanita (ed.), *Dialogue in the World Disorder: AResponse to the Threat of Unilateralism and World Terrorism*, Jakarta: Center for Languages and Cultures, UIN, Hidayatullah University, 2004. My contribution on Islam and pluralism, 'Islamic Civilization and the Quest for Democratic Pluralism: Good Governance and the Political Culture of Non-Violence' is on pp. 159–201.
- 7 On this status of religious minorities in Islam, see Bat Ye'or, *Islam and Dhimmitude: Where Civilizations Collide*, Cranbury, N.J.: Associated University Press, 2002. If religious reforms are dismissed and if a breaking up with the taboo related to how Muslims view non-Muslims, then no democratic pluralism in substance can be established in Islamic thought and practice.
- 8 These proceedings were published in Cairo and edited by Murad Wahba, *Islam and Civilization: Proceedings of the First International Islamic Philosophy Conference, 19–22 November 1979*, Cairo: Ain Shams University Press and the English Bookshop, 1982. Herein Mukti Ali, 'Islam and Indonesian Culture', pp. 15–34, and B. Tibi, 'Islam and Secularization', pp. 65–80.
- 9 E. Gellner, *Reason, Religion and Postmodernity*, London: Routledge, 1993, pp. 84–6 on cultural relativism versus Enlightenment.

- 10 For the controversy between Clifford Geertz and Ernest Gellner on this issue, see their contributions in the proceedings of the Erasmus Ascension Symposium, *The Limits of Pluralism: Neo-Absolutisms and Relativism*, Amsterdam: Praemium Erasmianum Foundation, 1994.
 - 11 Abdulaziz Sachedina, *The Islamic Roots of Democratic Pluralism*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2001. In this unpromising book by Sachedina, the thinking of Abdullahi A. An-Na'im, *Toward an Islamic Reformation: Civil Liberties, Human Rights and International Law*, Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1990 is rejected.
 - 12 See note 7.
 - 13 D. Philipot, 'The Challenge of September 11 to Secularism in International Relations', *World Politics*, October 2002, Vol. 55, No. 1, pp. 66–95.
 - 14 Sachedina, *Islamic Roots*, p. 6.
 - 15 See my paper on Islam, freedom and democracy in the Arab world, presented to CEPS (an EU think tank) in Brussels and published in M. Emerson (ed.), *Democratization in the European Neighborhood of Europe*, Brussels: CEPS, 2005, pp. 93–116.
 - 16 See Sohail H. Hashmi (ed.), *Islamic Political Ethics. Civil Society, Pluralism and Conflict*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2002.
 - 17 Ş. Mardin, 'Civil Society in Islam', in J.A. Hall (ed.), *Civil Society: Theory, History, Comparison*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995, pp. 278–9.
 - 18 For a contrary view, see B. Tibi, 'The Cultural Underpinning of Civil Society in Islamic Civilization: Bridging Between Civilization', in E. Özdalga and S. Persson (eds), *Civil Society, Democracy and the Muslim World*, Istanbul: Swedish Research Institute, 1997, pp. 23–32.
 - 19 Hasan Sa'b, *Islam al-Hurriyya, la Islam al-Ubudiyya* (An Islam of Freedom, not an Islam of Despotism), Beirut: Dar al-Ilm Lilmalayin, 1979.
 - 20 Center for Arab Unity Studies, ed., *al-Demoqratiyya wa Huquq al-Insan fi al-Watan al-Arabi*, Beirut: Center für Arab Unity Studies, 1983. Herein Hasan Hanafi states, 'The greatest gap in Islamic history is the lack of institutions that guarantee the implementation of Islamic notions' (ibid., p. 211).
 - 21 On the personalisation of authority in Islam and weak institutions, see B. Tibi, *Der wahre Imam: Der Islam von Mohammed bis zur Gegenwart*, Munich: Piper, 1996; on inner-Islamic war (*fitna*) as a resulting from the inability to deal with discord see Hichem Djait, *al-Fitna*, Beirut: al-Talia, 1989; on Islam and democracy, see L. Diamond, M.F. Plattner and D. Brumberg (eds), *Islam and Democracy in the Middle East*, Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003; on the current difficulties to establish democracy in contemporary Islam, see B. Tibi, 'Education and Democratization in an Age of Islamism', in A.M. Olson, D.M. Steiner and I.S. Tuuli (eds), *Educating for Democracy*, Lanham, Md. and Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004, pp. 203–19.
 - 22 See S. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996. In contrast, B. Tibi, 'International Morality and Cross-Cultural Bridging', in H. Schmiegelow (ed.), *Preventing the Clash of Civilizations: A Peace Strategy for the Twenty-First Century*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999, pp. 107–26.
- It is unfortunate that the dismissal of Huntington resulted in a dismissing of any debate on civilisation. As early as 1962, Raymond Aron pointed to the relevance of the 'heterogeneity of civilizations' being artificially veiled by the then existing bipolarity which proved not to be as enduring as civilisations themselves. *ibid.*, Editions: Calmann-Lévy. This prognosis materialized, and the literature on this subject has been mushrooming. See, among others, S. Hunter, *The Future of Islam and the West. Clash of Civilizations or Peaceful Coexistence?*, London: Praeger, 1998; F. Gerges, *America and Political Islam, Clash of Cultures or Clash*

- of Interests?*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999; G. Fuller and I. Lesser, *A Sense of Siege: The Geopolitics of Islam and the West*, Boulder, Col.: Westview Press, 1995 and B. Tibi, *Islam between Culture and Politics*, New York: Palgrave, 2001, new expanded edition, 2005, pp. 210–30.
- 23 Yusuf al-Qaradawi, *al-Hulul al-Mustawradah (The Imported Solutions)*, Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risalah, 1980. It is most disturbing to find texts by al-Qaradawi in the ill-informed reader C. Kurzman (ed.), *Liberal Islam: A Sourcebook*, New York: Oxford University Press (see note 56 below). For an authoritative criticism of political Islam by a leading enlightened Muslim, M. Said al-Ashmawi, *al-Islami al-Siyasi*, Cairo: Dar Sinah, 1987; French translation: *L'Islamisme contre L'Islam*, Paris: Editon la Découverte, 1989.
- 24 On the first and second wave of Hellenisation in medieval Islam, see W.M. Watt, *Islamic Philosophy and Theology*, 2nd edn, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995, pp. 37–8, 91–2. The magnitude of intellectual indebtedness of Islamic political philosophy to Hellenism is shown in the contributions published in the book edited by C. Butterworth, *The Political Aspects of Islamic Philosophy: Essays in Honor of Muhsin S. Mahdi*, Harvard Middle Eastern Monographs, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992. Mahdi was one of the sources of intellectual inspiration for me while writing my intellectual history of Islam. See Tibi, *Der Wahre Imam*, herein Part II on Islamic rationalism and Hellenisation; on Mahdi see the preface, p. 13 of this reference.
- 25 Sadik Jalal al-Azm, *al-Istishraq wa al-Istiqraḥ ma'kusan (Orientalism in Reverse)*, *Dhihniyyat al-Tahrim*, London and Cyprus: Riad al-Rayyes, 1992, pp. 17–86.
- 26 See note 23.
- 27 On the Islamic political philosopher and rationalist al-Farabi in Tjitze J. de Boer, *Geschichte der Philosophie im Islam*, Stuttgart: Frommann, 1901, pp. 98–116; on al-Farabi as 'second master' next to Aristotle, p. 100. The work of al-Farabi is available in an English translation completed by R. Walzer (ed.), *al-Farabi on the Perfect State*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985. See also the chapter on al-Farabi in my book *Der wahre Imam*, pp. 133–50.
- 28 B. Tibi, 'Culture and Knowledge: The Politics of Islamization of Knowledge as a Postmodern Project? The Fundamentalist Claim to De-Westernization', *Theory, Culture, Society*, 1995, Vol. 12, No. 2, pp. 1–24. This Islamisation of knowledge is paralleled by the so-called Islamisation of democracy.
- 29 See the excellent study by R.W. Hefner, *Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000. There is, however, also an uncivil Islam of the Jamaah Islamiyya in Indonesia analysed by G. Barton, *Indonesia's Struggle: Jemaah Islamiyya and the Soul of Islam*, Sydney: University of South Wales Press, 2004.
- 30 Abu al-A'la al-Mawdudi, *al-Islam wa al-madaniyya al-haditha*, reprint Cairo, no date. This person is next to the Egyptian Qutb as an authority of political Islam. On Maududi see also M. Dharif, *al-Islam al-siyasi fi al-watan al-arabi*, Casablanca: Maktabat al-Umma, 1992, pp. 98–9; and Y.M. Choueiri, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, Boston, Mass.: Twayne Publications, 1990, pp. 93–4.
- 31 See my contribution to the volume edited by Schmiegelow, *Democracy in Asia*, pp. 127–46 and in my book *The Challenge of Fundamentalism: Political Islam and the New World Disorder*, Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1998; enlarged and updated edition 2002, Chapter 9 on democracy, presented as an alternative option to Islamism. This book exists in a Bahasa translation published in Jakarta.
- 32 J.L. Esposito and J.O. Voll, *Islam and Democracy*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1996. Disagreement is expressed in a critical review published, see B. Tibi, *Journal of Religion*, 1998, Vol. 78, No. 4, pp. 667–9. I also believe Esposito's other book, *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1992, is in many similar ways most misleading and highly flawed.

- 33 See note 13 above and B. Tibi, 'Islamism, National and International Security after September 11', in Guenther Baechler and Andreas Wenger (eds), *Conflict and Cooperation: Festschrift of Kurt Spillmann*, Zurich: Neue Züricher Zeitung Publishers, 2002, pp. 127–52.
- 34 M. Marty and S. Appleby (eds), *The Fundamentalism Project*, Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1991–5, see Vol. II, *Fundamentalisms and Society*, 1993, herein: B. Tibi, 'The Worldview of Sunni Arab Fundamentalists', pp. 73–102; see also Parts I and III in Vol. III, *Fundamentalisms and the State*, 1993 on *Remaking Politics*.
- 35 The authoritative history of Islamic civilisation as Islamitude is M. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, Chicago, Ill.: The University of Chicago Press, 1974, 3 vols. See also, Sir Hamilton Gibb, *Studies on the Civilization of Islam*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1962, reprinted 1982.
- 36 Sayyid Qutb, *al-Jihad fi sabil Allah*, reprinted Cairo: Dar al-Isma', 1992 and also the reprint of Qutb, *al-Salam al-alami wa al-Islam*, Cairo: al-Shuruq, 1992.
- 37 Masykuri Abdillah, *Responses of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals to the Concept of Democracy*, Hamburg: Abera Verlag, 1997, based on a Hamburg Ph.D. thesis.
- 38 See B. Tibi, 'A Migration Story: From Muslim Immigrants to European Citizens of Heart?', *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs*, 2007, Vol. 31, No. 1, pp. 147–68.
- 39 F. von der Mehden, *Two Worlds of Islam: Interaction between Southeast Asia and the Middle East*, Miami-Jacksonville, Fla.: University of Florida Press, 1993, p. 97.
- 40 On Islam and democracy, see the most inspiring contribution of Hamid Enayat, *Modern Islamic Political Thought*, Austin, Tex.: University of Texas Press, 1982, pp. 125–38 and also the references in notes 1, 7 and 19 above.
- 41 Rifa'a R. al-Tahtawi, *Takhlis al-ibriz ila talkis Paris*, Cairo, 1834; reprint Beirut, no date. See the excellent German translation of Tahtawi's Paris diary, ed. and with an introduction by Karl Stowasser, *Ein Muslim entdeckt Europa*, Munich: C.H. Beck, 1989, p. 223.
- 42 L. Binder, *Islamic Liberalism: A Critique of Development Ideologies*, Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1988. In reading Binder, I had a hard time swallowing the chapter on the intellectual father of Islamic fundamentalism Sayyid Qutb (labelled as 'religious aesthetic') being incorporated as a part of deliberations on Islamic liberalism (*sic*). Political Islam and Islamic liberalism are two different issues, as different as fire and water.
- 43 Abbas Mahmud al-Aqqad, *al-demoqratiyya fi al-Islam (Democracy in Islam)*, Cairo, 1952, many reprints.
- 44 On this issue, see L. Lipson, *The Ethical Crises of Civilization: Moral Meltdown or Advance?* London: Sage, 1993, p. 63. For more details on the cultural influence of Islamic civilisation upon the European Renaissance, see also B. Tibi, *Kreuzzug und Djihad: Der Islam und die christliche Welt*, Munich: Bertelsmann, 1999, Chapter 5. On the Renaissance as a basic pillar of cultural modernity, see: Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, Chapter 1.
- 45 Lipson, *The Ethical Crises of Civilization*, p. 62.
- 46 G. Makdisi, *The Rise of Colleges: Institutions of Learning in Islam and the West*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1981, pp. 77–80.
- 47 For an elaboration of the two rival traditions in Islamic intellectual history, i.e. *fiqh* and *falsafa*, see B. Tibi, 'Politisches Denken im klassischen und mittelalterlichen Islam zwischen Fiqh und Falsafa', in Iring Fetscher (ed.) *Pipers Handbuch der politischen Ideen: Das Mittelalter*, Munich: Piper Verlag, 1993, Vol. II, pp. 87–140. See also Part II in B. Tibi, *Der wahre Imam*.
- 48 For more details, see Anke von Kuegelgen, *Averroes und die arabische Moderne. Ansätze zu einer Neugründung des Rationalismus im Islam*, Leiden: Brill Press, 1994.

- 49 Murad Wahba, 'The Paradoxon of Averroes', in *The Proceedings of the First Conference on Islam and Philosophy*.
- 50 Hamid Enayat, as cited in Tibi, 'A Migration Story'; also Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798–1939*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962.
- 51 See note 1.
- 52 Mohammed Abed al-Jabri, *Arab-Islamic Philosophy*, Austin, Tex.: University of Texas Press, 1999.
- 53 Enayat, *Modern Islamic Political Thought*, p. 131.
- 54 Ibid., p. 126.
- 55 See B. Tibi, 'Secularization and De-Secularization in Modern Islam', *Religion-Staat-Gesellschaft: Journal for the Study of Beliefs and Worldviews*, 2000, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 95–117.
- 56 Therefore, I strongly disagree with R. Baker, *Islam Without Fear: Egypt and the New Islamists*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003. See also E. Goldberg, R. Kasaba and J. Migdal (eds), *Rules and Rights in the Middle East: Democracy, Law, and Society*, Seattle, Wash.: Washington University Press, 1993, p. 8.
- 57 This view is reflected in my article 'Fundamentalism' in S.M. Lipset (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Democracy*, 4 vols, Vol. II, pp. 507–10, Washington, D.C.: The Congressional Quarterly, 1985. For an update on this issue, see my Chapter 13 in M. Hawkesworth and M. Kogan (eds) *Encyclopedia of Government and Politics*, London: Routledge, 2004, 2 vols, Vol. I, pp. 184–204. On the difference between faith and political religion in Islam with regard to security, see B. Tibi, 'Between Islam and Islamism', in T. A. Jacoby and B. Sasley (eds), *Redefining Security in the Middle East*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002, pp. 62–82.
- 58 See B. Tibi, 'Islamic Shari'a as a Constitutional Law?' in The Japanese Association of Comparative Law (ed.), *Church and State*, Tokyo: Nihon University Press, 2005, pp. 126–70.
- 59 Hefner, *Civil Islam* and Barton, *Indonesia's Struggle*.
- 60 Hefner, *Civil Islam*, p. 215.
- 61 See B. Tibi, 'War and Peace in Islam', in T. Nardin (ed.), *The Ethics of War and Peace*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996, also 1998, pp. 128–45; see also Sayyid Qutb (referenced in note 36); worth reading is the Qutb interpretation by R. Euben, *Enemy in the Mirror: Islamic Fundamentalism and the Limits of Modern Rationalism: A Work of Comparative Political Theory*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999, Chapter 3.
- 62 See the contributions to The Culture Matters Research Project of the Fletcher School published in two volumes by Lawrence Harrison (ed.), *Developing Cultures*, New York: Routledge, 2006, herein the chapters by B. Tibi on Islam and cultural change included in Vol. I.
- 63 See note 21.
- 64 al-Qaradawi, *Hatmiyyat al-Hallal-Islami*, Vol. I, pp. 50–1. Qaradawi is the leading Islamist, not a liberal as listed in Charles Kurzman (ed.), *Liberal Islam: Sourcebook*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 196–204, where he is placed just ahead of the truly liberal Muslim M. Arkoun, pp. 205–22.
- 65 On this predicament, see Tibi, *Islam between Culture and Politics*. A Bahasa translation of this book is under way.
- 66 See the important and inspiring chapter on ethnopolitics by G. Ben-Dor in M. Esman and I. Rabinovich (eds), *Ethnicity, Pluralism and the State in the Middle East*, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1988, pp. 71–92.
- 67 On educating in democracy, see Tibi, 'Education and Democratization in an Age of Islamism'.
- 68 See the controversy included in the contributions by the Iranian ambassador to Indonesia, Shaban Sh. Moaddab, and by myself, both published in Helmanita

(ed.) *Dialogue in the World Disorder*: Moaddab, pp. 149–58 and Tibi, pp. 159–201 and on the way the Iranian leadership perceives itself; Graham Fuller, *The Center of the Universe*, Boulder, Col.: Westview Press, 1991.

69 On Wahhabi Islam, see S. Schwarz, *The Two Faces of Islam: The House of Saud from Tradition to Terror*, New York: Doubleday, 2002.

70 On Islam as a civilisation in Asia, see F. Braudel, *A History of Civilizations*, London: The Penguin Press, 1994, Part II.

4 The crisis of religious authority

Education, information and technology

Bryan S. Turner

Introduction: the reform of religious knowledge

The challenge to religious authority in Islam has grown out of its bruising encounter with the West from the beginning of the nineteenth century and from the first stirrings of secularisation through military and educational reform. Historians of modern Islam are familiar with this account of the origins of reformist movements.¹ In this chapter, I am primarily concerned with a different order of change: the growth of a global Islamic diaspora, the impact of educational reform on a new generation of Muslims growing up in a Western consumer culture, the rapid advance of information technology and the emerging culture of individualism among Muslim youth.² These macro-social changes necessarily represent a challenge to traditional forms of religious knowledge and constitute a crisis of authority. This religious crisis has a clear parallel with religious individualism, the rise of a religious market place and new spirituality in Europe and the USA.³ There are, nevertheless, significant differences in the contemporary transformations of Christianity and Islam that are, in part, a function of their different organisational structures and doctrines of authority to which we need to attend. However, it is the parallels rather than the cultural differences that are striking, pointing as they do to common social processes.

The cultural transformation of Islam in the modern period can be traced historically to the arrival of Napoleon Bonaparte's expeditionary force at Alexandria on 1 July 1798. Bonaparte's brief encounter with Egypt demonstrated the decisive superiority of European technology and social organisation over the Ottoman Empire, and it was this military expedition that launched the process of European colonialism in the Middle East, which lasted until the Suez campaign of 1956. It also launched the spread of modern ideologies – positivism, civil rights and secularism – that were aspects of the French Enlightenment. The disciples of Saint Simon did more to change Egypt than the artillery of Bonaparte and Nelson. Responses to this colonial intervention can be traced through subsequent reformist activity among such Muslim intellectuals as Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1839–97), Muhammad Abduh (1849–1905) and Rashid Rida (1865–1935).

These intellectuals sought to understand the decline of Muslim power, to explain the causes of this decline and to offer a remedy. Influenced by European social philosophy, especially by Ernest Renan and Herbert Spencer, their diverse and heterogeneous writings had a common theme, namely that Islam had declined by departing from its pristine roots and only a fundamental reform of Islam could offer an effective solution. However, their version of Islam was radically innovative, and, despite its apparent claims to restore the past, it was oriented towards the future. This form of purified Islam was confrontational in its efforts to challenge the religious establishment and to rid Islam of its traditional elements. Islam was, they argued, a rational religion, and its rational components were exclusively preserved in the Qur'an which could not be understood through the fog of medieval theological and legal disputations. The revival of Islam required the liberation of independent reasoning (*ijtihad*). These currents of reform were crystallised in the Egyptian context by Hasan al-Banna (1900–49) who was the founder of contemporary Sunni activism and the Muslim Brothers. Banna, who came from a small village and whose father was a watchmaker, challenged the secularising elite of Cairo, the imperialists who effectively ran Egyptian affairs and the puppet regime of King Farouk, and called for the creation of an Islamic state.⁴

This wave of reform from 1798 to the end of the Second World War represented a significant challenge to the hierarchy of Muslim society and its traditional modes of teaching and learning. It was, therefore, the first significant modern challenge to traditional Islamic authority which depended on a collective consensus and customary practices. This transformation of Islam and the current crisis of religious authority can be understood in terms of two radical changes – the growth of mass education and literacy and the availability of new communication technologies. Unlike the eruption of the first movement towards the reform of religious knowledge, these contemporary movements are taking place in the context of a significant increase in both secondary and tertiary education in the Muslim world. Second, this educational revolution is occurring in the context of a technological revolution in the means of communication, namely the rise of the World Wide Web. One clear example of these educational and technical changes can be taken from the recent history of Iran.

The Islamic revolution

During the Qajar period (1779–1925), two social processes transformed Iranian society: an internal deterioration of its domestic institutions and the growth of contacts with the West. However, both Westernisation and reform were resisted by the traditional religious elite. The power of the *ulama* over the masses was considerable. Only the *ulama* could decide on matters relating to religious law and, according to the *usuli* doctrine, each believer had to follow a living *mujtahed* who in turn received his livelihood

from donations from the laity rather than from the state. As a result, the religious establishment had no material interest in reforming the system. Internal reform grew eventually out of military necessity following defeat in wars against Russia and in response to the treaties of Golstan (1813) and Turkmanchay (1828). French and later British military training missions were set up in Tehran, and military modernisation resulted in the long run in administrative and economic reform. The reform of Iranian society was sought in the reform of education as the necessary basis for modernising society as a whole. The state, rather than the religious leadership, assumed responsibility for these educational reforms. However, attempts to reform Iranian society did not prevent Qajar decline, and it was the authoritarian rule of the Pahlavi shahs which eventually accomplished a range of educational and social changes that rescued Iran from imminent collapse. The educational system was designed to promote patriotism, social unity and national independence.⁵

Growth in secondary schooling and higher education was rapid. The number of students as a percentage of the population rose from 2.5 per cent in the early 1940s to 22 per cent by the end of the 1970s. However, it was not until 1967 that higher education was given some priority with the establishment of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education. Having blocked higher education because he saw students as a source of political dissent, the Shah reversed his policies and promoted the unrestrained growth of universities. However, the growth of education had paradoxical consequences including a severe reduction in educational standards, overcrowding and inadequate facilities, inadequate vocational training in colleges, and low pay and inadequate opportunities for university staff. The early Iranian universities also suffered from the absence of any emphasis on research and a corresponding dependency on foreign experts. Although the education system was confronted by major difficulties, it had a major impact on the process of Westernisation. One clear illustration was the entrance of women graduates into areas previously closed to them such as medicine, government service and, occasionally, politics. Although conservatives did not welcome these changes, they were reluctant to reverse these developments entirely; they also wanted the national benefits flowing from technology and technical education.

The speed and depth of secularising change in Iran resulted in 'West-strickenness' (*gharbzadegi*) and strict control of the universities by the Government and harsh suppression of any signs of opposition had fuelled student opposition. It was popular and professional discontent and resentment with the modernisation of Iran that laid the foundations for the Islamic revolution. Ayatollah Khomeini's revolution in 1979 set in motion the Islamisation of the university system, the purpose of which was to create a 'new Islamic person'.

The ideology of the Islamic Revolution owed a great deal to the religious and philosophical teaching of Ali Shariati (1933–77) one of the principal

architects of Islamic revolutionary thought in direct response to the ideology of modernity and as a challenge to the modernisation strategies of the Pahlavi dynasty.⁶ During the reign of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi (1941–79), the overwhelming ambition to suppress Communism meant that there was relative political tolerance of Islam. In the period before the Islamic Revolution, Muslim associations and intellectuals flourished, and religious societies among the urban poor provided a powerful political network.

Influenced by Marxism and radical Shi'ite theology, Shariati was critical of modernisation, which he saw as a sinister means of seducing and corrupting non-Western societies. In order to promote their own exports, the Western powers had undermined the self-sufficient domestic economies of traditional societies and, hence, Western modernity in destroying traditional patterns of production and consumption, demolished the economic foundations of its traditional cultures, including its religious institutions. Although there are many critics of Western imperialism, Shariati went further in developing a deep and sophisticated understanding of the alienation of the self, or in his terms the 'emptying' of the self.

Although Shariati placed a substantial emphasis on the revolutionary role of intellectuals in defending culture against Western consumerism, he was also critical of the distance separating them from the masses. These intellectuals who had abandoned their traditional religious roots to become modern were merely pseudo-intellectuals. Rejecting secularism as a philosophy of the intellectual elite, he looked towards religion as the main line of defence against cultural imperialism. Intellectuals had to recognise the problem of living in what he called a 'dual society' in which only a small elite became genuinely modernised, while leaving the masses in a state of poverty and powerlessness. Only these religiously motivated intellectuals could form a bridge between the secular elite and the proletarian masses.

Although Shariati was clearly critical of the consumer world that was emerging in his own time, the analysis of the self and subjectivity was central to Shariati's philosophy. Shariati's socio-theology exhibited a tension between insisting that human free will is the defining characteristic of humanity and arguing that human subjectivity presupposes submission to God. He sought to solve this dilemma by interpreting human existence as a journey away from material existence to a spiritual life. Humans are alienated in nature rather than from nature, and the spiritual life requires the radical subordination of the body to a spiritual purpose. The natural body is a 'desolate abode' or a prison from which human beings must escape in order to realise their true essence. Shariati recognised that this solution would always be partial, because human existence was a perennial conflict between autonomy and submission that he described as a condition of human bewilderment. The importance of Shariati is that the very influence of his thought is one further indication that Khomeini's Islamic Revolution was by no means a revolution of tradition; it involved modernisation but according to his interpretation of Islamic values. Shariati is representative

of the new intellectual in Islam. Embracing much of the secular culture of Paris, including the philosophy of Karl Marx, Shariati mobilised religious knowledge against the negative consequences of rapid change in Iran.⁷

The failure of nationalist modernisation and the rise of a radical Islamic alternative in Iran provides an historical model that throws some degree of analytical light on similar revolutionary or radical Islamic movements elsewhere. These ideological changes, which we may broadly call 'the Islamisation of knowledge' have occurred in a context where for many Muslim societies the twin processes of nationalist resurgence (against the legacy of colonialism) and secular modernisation (against the legacy of stagnant traditionalism) have failed. The means of communication are as a result often the means for expressing this political alienation through the medium of religious revival.⁸

Political Islam

Political Islam is the political consequence of the social frustrations, following from the economic changes of the global neo-liberal experiments of the 1970s and 1980s.⁹ The demographic revolution in the Muslim world has produced large cohorts of young Muslims, who, although often educated to college level, have not found the occupational opportunities to satisfy the aspirations and expectations that had been inflated by secular nationalist governments. The current wave of political frustration was born out of the aftermath of the Arab defeat in the 1967 war with Israel and achieved its apex in the Islamic Revolution. These oppositional movements have been further inflamed by the Gulf War in 1990 and by the 'War on Terrorism' following 9/11.¹⁰ In sociological terms, twentieth-century Islamism has been seen as a product the frustrations of diverse social strata including unpaid civil servants, overworked and undervalued schoolteachers, underemployed technicians and marginalised university professors whose social and economic interests were not well served by either the secular nationalism of Nasser, Muhammad Reza Shah, Suharto and Saddam Hussein, or by the neo-liberal economic policies of Anwar Sadat in Egypt or Chadli Benjedid in Algeria. The social and economic dislocations that have been created by economic globalisation produced favourable political conditions for external Western support of those Arab elites who were to benefit most from oil revenues. Bureaucratic authoritarianism has been the political result of this elite formation. In summary, divergent strands of Islamic revivalism and radicalism are products of the failures of authoritarian nationalist governments and the socio-economic divisions that have been exacerbated by the negative aspects of neo-liberal globalisation. The social dislocations resulting from these political conditions have contributed a crisis of religious authority, the immediate causes of which are connected with educational reforms and the availability of new technologies. These social changes have made the younger generation of Muslim reformers critical of Western societies, especially under

the leadership of George W. Bush, but also critical of the traditional political and intellectual leadership of much of the Muslim world.

The decline of religious tradition

In traditional societies with low levels of literacy, intellectual and social status were typically expressed through mastery of a 'high language', especially a language that was conceived in some sense as the vehicle of the sacred. To have academic mastery of these languages was to enjoy considerable symbolic as well as political power throughout the pre-modern period. The two principal examples would be Latin within the Roman Church and Arabic in Islam. Latin was from the third to the twentieth century, not only the international vehicle of the Church but also the learned language of the Western world. It dominated schooling, where in England the grammar school where 'grammar' was in fact 'Latin'. The dominance of Latin was brought into question as a result of the Reformation in Europe when vernacular languages began to play a larger role in religious instruction and at a later stage in worship. Reformed Protestantism came to place particular emphasis on literacy and direct access to the Bible under its general notion of the 'priesthood of all believers.' Literacy was eventually stimulated by technological developments in printing which had further radical implications for conventional forms of both religious and political authority. Arabic is the language of revelation in the Qur'an and a sound comprehension of Arabic was the foundation of traditional religious knowledge and authority. However, English is increasingly the language of Muslim websites and offers intellectuals in the diaspora an instant international audience.

The crisis of religious authority can be traced to the changing relationship between traditional religious training, the growth of secular university-trained graduates and the emergence of a struggle over religious audiences. The authority and social functions of the traditional *ulama* and *madrasa* have declined through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and in recent decades few significant leaders of Islamic reform have emerged from the ranks of the traditional *ulama*. Many clerics now reach a new audience by leaving the confines of the traditional *madrasas* and religious seminaries to speak about issues, including secular topics, on the radio and television. By moving into a world of self-taught *mullahs*, they put themselves beyond the control of the religious corporations. In any case the graduates from the traditional *madrasas* cannot compete effectively with graduates from secular universities, who may have been taught in English and who are likely to possess a technical discipline. The strategy of the traditionally trained graduates is to push for the Islamisation of the state bureaucracy to enhance their job opportunities, but the intense competition for status and jobs also spills over into competition between Shia and Sunni communities, for example, in Pakistan. One consequence of these struggles is that religious knowledge is no longer tied to specifically religious institutions.

The diaspora of Islam globally also means that at a certain level Islam is no longer tied to given territories in the Middle East, South-East Asia or Africa. With this deterritorialisation of Islam, there has been an explosion of young men who are self-proclaimed preachers and teachers. Along with these changes, there has emerged a new stratification of teachers and intellectuals.¹¹ In addition to the secularised Western-educated intellectuals, there are the 'new intellectuals' who have a radically different relationship to religious knowledge. For the traditional system, knowledge was contained within a finite number of religious books and commentaries on the Qur'an. There was little scope for innovation or interpretation, and religious knowledge was kept out of the political sphere. For the new intellectuals, knowledge tends to be fragmented and discontinuous; it is to be found in manuals, blogs, brochures and lecture notes. Knowledge is no longer a finite body of knowledge mediated by traditional scholars but available to all through the new media.

The new breed of intellectuals is, thus, self-trained, independent, mobile and charismatic. As we have seen, these intellectuals represent a sharp break with traditional, conservative, formally trained Muslim leaders and religious authorities (the *ulama*) of earlier generations, but their appeal is also different from the secular, nationalist intellectuals of the 1970s. The emergence of these new intellectuals is a function of the spread of higher education in the Islamic world and a consequence of deep social frustrations resulting from the failure of modernisation, especially under conditions of neo-liberal globalisation.¹² The audience of the new intellectuals is not to be found necessarily in the Friday mosque but in the bookshop, on the website, and in the cassette. Many Muslim intellectuals have also joined the brain drain to the West where they often enjoy greater political freedom to express their unorthodox or at least non-traditional views. Two examples can be briefly considered in this respect. The Iranian intellectual Abdolkarim Soroush has argued that Islam does not require the regulation of the public sphere by the clergy, and, therefore, secularisation is not the enemy of Islam, that Islamic knowledge can change over time, and that Islam proclaims a new type of subjectivity, requiring self-reflection. While Soroush was periodically attacked by the traditional religious authorities, he has a global following among Shi'ites.¹³ Another example can be found in Mohammed Arkoun, Emeritus Professor at the Sorbonne in Paris, who aims to liberate Islamic history from its conventional framework and who employs the social sciences to develop a critique for liberating reason from the constraints of dogma. Arkoun's *The Unthought in Contemporary Islamic Thought* represents such a philosophical deconstruction of conventions.¹⁴

These changes in the authoritative basis of knowledge are also connected with generational politics. This generational gap between immigrants and their children is particularly problematic in Western Europe and North America. While the children of migrants often have the benefit of a reasonable level of secondary education, their parents often have a poor com-

mand of English (or other European language). In addition, many foreign *imams* who are hired by local mosques do not speak a European language and have a poor understanding of the issues faced by youth in these diasporic communities. Their sermons and attitudes do not find any affinity with younger second-generation Muslims.

Expressive individualism

The style and meaning of knowledge has also changed with a greater emphasis on faith and authenticity rather than on academic or religious scholarship. Knowledge has to be immediately accessible, because like other aspects of a consumer society it has to be immediately available on demand. This style of knowledge acquisition is part of the growth of individualism following what sociologists have called the 'expressive revolution' of the 1970s that gave a greater emphasis to affectivity and expressivity over cognitive rationalism.¹⁵

Olivier Roy's analysis of the new individualism in neo-fundamentalist Islam converges in an interesting fashion with Charles Taylor's analysis of the varieties of religious experience in modernity. Taylor's commentary is a reflection on the work of the pragmatist philosopher William James.¹⁶ One aspect of James's pragmatist social psychology of religion was to understand the differences between types of religious experience. He distinguished between the healthy-minded 'once-born' and the sick souls of the 'twice born' individuals, in which only the latter was driven by a sense of sin and pessimism. The point of James's pragmatism was to focus on everyday experiences and practical consequences rather than on theological knowledge, religious belief and formal institutions. It is from the twice born that we derive the need for salvation and meaningfulness in human life. James's question is therefore not unlike Weber's concern for the survival of charisma. James asks, in the modern world, how can a vivid sense of divinity be maintained, and how can we find meaning in our modern condition? A lively religious experience in modern society becomes problematical because we often find ourselves divorced from any cultural framework in which our experiences could be connected to some larger whole. An integrated moral world is very different from the expressive culture of a consumer society in which fashion, immediate gratification and individual choice are amplified by a global advertising market.

There are occasions in the modern world, however, which resemble the 'elementary forms of the religious life' as described by Émile Durkheim when, for example, religious experience and national purpose coincide as with Roman Catholicism during the struggle of Solidarity for Polish national independence.¹⁷ However, we may also be entering what Taylor has called a post-Durkheimian society, where institutionalised religious hierarchies are no longer the driving force behind these individuated forms of religiosity. With modernity, the space of fashion is another structure

of simultaneity and immediacy. In Christianity, this new youth culture of expressivity is post-denominational and tends to eschew formal ecclesiastical structures in favour of immediate experiences which are not mediated by bureaucracies.

Unlike in the recent past, when religious experiences were mediated by collectivities in the form of institutionalised churches or denominations, post-Durkheimian religiosity, Taylor argues, is becoming highly personal and subjective. Theological orthodoxy is increasingly irrelevant to personal belief and the collective structures of authorities that ultimately found their legitimation in these religious constructions are becoming socially redundant. This individual subjectivity is perhaps most clearly expressed, for instance, through personal blogs where ordinary people record their daily activities such as cleaning out the fridge or walking the dog, and these are shared with the world. Yet this very subjectivity, which is an important feature of modern spirituality, is itself the consequence of Western modernisation.

This individualised religiosity can be traced to the socio-political environment that has been created in the wealthy liberal democracies of Western capitalism. It resulted from a combination of consumerism and affluence which eroded the relevance of traditional forms of religious solidarity and interaction, but it is also associated with the rise of the human-rights culture.

With the development of the secular state in the West, law came to be conceived as the command of the state, and, hence, laws were institutionally separate from both religion and morality. The decline of the Holy Roman Empire, the separation of church and state with the Treaty of Westphalia, the decline of the authority of ecclesiastical courts and the emergence of law issued by a secular state were important stages in the separation of law from morality. Positivist jurisprudence went further in seeking to convert the interpretation and creation of law into a science, thereby removing any subjective evaluation of law. Moral guidelines and legal rules can only be distinguished by the procedures by which they are produced, and the scope of positive law was to be determined by an appropriate legal official such as a judge. Max Weber, in his sociology of the law, developed this positivist command theory in the definition of the state as an institution having a monopoly of force in a given territory. This positivist tradition was hostile to natural law in which laws had expressed an ultimately religious notion of the just society. In the natural-law tradition, procedural correctness was never a guarantee of the existence of a just law and in western jurisprudence 'legality' and 'legitimacy' came to have separate and distinctive significance.¹⁸

Because Islamic legal systems were often dislodged or reorganised by Western positive law during colonisation in the nineteenth and twentieth century, in the post-colonial period, there has been a significant revival of Islamic legal thinking in order to modernise legal practice making the impact of Islamic law more widespread in the community. This modernisation of law often resulted in legal pluralism. However, more recently in

Malaysia and Indonesia, there has been a more determined attempt to make the shariah dominant and, thereby, to subordinate English common law in the public domain. In the Malay case, shariah has been made more central by lawyers who were as often as not trained in English legal practice and imbibed the view that traditional legal frameworks required drastic reform. The Islamisation of law in the public domain also involves radical changes to tradition and, in particular, to the creation of legal systems within which customary law and lore (such as *adat*) can have no place.¹⁹

New technologies

These global developments in the religious expressivity of individuals, in the presence of religion in the public sphere and the revival of religious idioms as a basis for political discourse cannot be understood without taking into account the growth of new communication technologies and their social impact. Although these new-media technologies have contradictory consequences, they provide alternative, deregulated and local opportunities for democratic discussion, and, hence, they make an indispensable contribution to the growth of the civil sphere. The new media are important politically and socially, because they have the unintended effect of eroding traditional forms of authority that are either based on memory and oral transmission or on print-based forms of textual learning. Traditional knowledge is associated with traditional forms of authority and specific pedagogical technologies that produce a disciplinary self.²⁰ Traditional religious knowledge is characteristically linear, hierarchical and repetitive. It requires an apprenticeship, discipline and order, whereas the knowledge on the World Wide Web is immediately available, requires little discipline and does not presuppose a hierarchical relationship between master and discipline. Its horizontal structure implies a democratic ethos that is contrary to the spirit of traditional instruction.

In historical terms, the Abrahamic religions have not discovered Truth through collective, democratic discussion. They are not based theologically on rational discussion but on various forms of revelation, the carriers of which were charismatic figures: Moses, Jesus, Mohammed. However, with the routinisation of these charismatic messages, revelation is recorded in the written word and can be approached routinely by human beings. With this transformation of revelation into scripture, these religious cultures required scribes and scholars to interpret the Word and transmit knowledge across generations through repetitive forms of learning.²¹ Before the invention of printing, memorising these charismatic messages was an essential requirement of the survival of a community, and recitation was proof of personal piety. Traditional qur'anic learning provides a classical illustration of a print-based culture that has promoted oral transmission through strict discipleship. In such cases, a specialised hermeneutics as the basis for the authority of interpretation was required by traditional religious elements to

safeguard the reading of a text. The Qur'an, which, according to tradition, was originally written down on the shoulder blades of camels, is now available in a global multimedia environment. Similarly, the Mosaic code, which was, according to tradition, originally written on tablets of stone, is now available in a variety of forms including the storylines of innumerable Hollywood films.

In addition, a new brand of religious instruction and conversion has emerged, particularly in America, which is based on television evangelism and the commodification of the Christian message. Fundamentalist Islam has also been assisted by the use of cassettes to record and transmit the sermons of radical clerics. Modern fundamentalism benefits considerably from the global communication media, but there are important differences between social worlds constructed on print-based knowledge and learning and an environment in which 'SMS' is probably the most important means of communication for young people.

A traditional library was typically organised on linear Dewey principles, orchestrated around recognised university disciplines and organised by professors according to a specific subject matter. By contrast, the modern reader, in surfing the net, has multiple choices about how to use knowledge sites and is exposed to a complex array of possible pathways. Entry points into the World Wide Web are largely ad hoc, tentative and temporary. Websites are rarely complete or finished, but always under construction. In this information environment, there can be no single authority, because no site, entry or file can be controlled by a single editor or centralised by a unified and coherent authority. In the new civil sphere, there are many free-riders, hackers and crackers. As a result, it is in the nature of modern knowledge to be temporary, incomplete and contested.

Global information systems and their associated technological cultures transform traditional forms of religious authority, because they open up opportunities for debate and for the emergence of alternative visions. Global network society and its pedagogy undermine traditional Islam and simultaneously promote the conditions for political Islam. The new media are essentially democratic in terms of access and availability, but they can also have corrosive consequences for those professions associated with text-based learning, such as academics, librarians and clergy. While fundamentalist groups in Islam, Christianity and Judaism employ modern forms of communication, the Internet promotes open discussion and, hence, prevents intellectual closure which was the basis of traditional authority. This democratisation of religious knowledge within the global network of diasporic communities is facilitated by the new information society in ways that constantly bring into question the traditional structures of learning and training.

Despite tendencies towards the monopolisation of information and knowledge by large corporations, the US administration finds it very difficult to control the flow and content of information, because the technology relies on freedom of access through the Internet, and, as a result, it cannot easily

establish any global control over these flows and as a result its political legitimacy as a global policeman is constantly under review. To take one example, Al-Jazeera continued to provide independent views and information about the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq despite US tank attacks on its offices, coming under fire in the Palestine Hotel in Baghdad and being expelled from Iraq. While the American press was initially mute about civilian casualties, figures on civilian deaths and damage to public utilities and civilian areas are debated and circulated online. Although journalism depends almost entirely on 'official sources', the World Wide Web provides countless opportunities for unofficial news-gathering. It is, essentially, a form of global gossip.

To take a further example, similar problems confront the Communist Party in China in relation to the control of religious and political dissent. One important modern development which the Party cannot easily control is the growth of the Internet as a means of mobilising political opinion, developing political education and sustaining critical evaluation of state activities. China's new computer users are primarily the post-1989 generation of urban, educated youth who use computers and the Internet to criticise party policies and to promote social and political reform. They are known as 'cyber-dissidents'. The Internet created a virtual public space which the Communist Party of China (CCP) sought to control by regulations, censorship, filtering and site blocks, but connections could always be routed by proxy servers in Hong Kong, Europe and the USA. Dissidents have, nevertheless, been attacked by the Party, and in July 2002 a Declaration of Citizens' Rights for the Internet was circulated as an expression of the civil rights in the UN Declaration.

Academic views of the role of the Internet in global politics are sharply divided. In *Incoherent Empire*, Michael Mann argued that modern states, including the USA, have relatively little precise control of the flow of information, but other critics see the Internet as an example of 'cyber-imperialism'.²² Within the context of domestic politics in China, the Internet is probably the most promising prerequisite of democratisation.²³

These complex functions of global information systems force us to rethink many conventional assumptions about power and authority in sociological theory. For example, Weber's three types of legitimacy in his *Economy and Society* – tradition, charisma and legal rational norms of authority – do not adequately describe the emerging norms of legitimacy in web-based systems.²⁴ Modern sociological notions of how the network shapes society have been significantly influenced by the sociological analysis of communication, who identified a number of major social changes associated with the emergence of network society.²⁵ These include:

- the growth of ubiquitous mobile telecommunications and computing links;
- the consolidation of electronically integrated, global financial markets;
- the expansion of an interlinked, cohesive capitalist economy;
- the shift in the labour force from primary and manufacturing industries to knowledge, information and communication industries;

- the emergence of 'real virtuality' in the hyper-texting of cultural and economic relations.

Nation-states operate with boundaries of legitimacy, but network society and networking recognise 'flows' as the conduits through which legitimacy is realised, and, as such, flows disconnect power from social hierarchies.

These electronic chains of information are entirely different from the chains of authorisation in Islamic traditions in which the *hadith* (sayings and customs of the Prophet) are regarded as legitimate where they have a continuous chain of known persons to verify their legitimacy. Data do not possess the identity to resist, and they do not have a focus to oppose. No longer embodied in persons, power is a switchpoint in the information flow. While the dominant managerial elites claim national control over these informational flows, the logic of networking is that control cannot be so concentrated for long at any single point in the system.

Network society is the site of struggles where hacking, cracking and viruses mark the new boundaries of such power conflicts. However, the global Internet was created through the interface of big science, military research and libertarian values. These three groups (business, military and libertarian) have a common interest in the development of an open, efficient system of global communication. The openness of the communicative architecture of the Internet is its main strength whereby users become both producers and shapers of the technology. The future of this open system will be a result of struggles and competition between four cultures and their elites, namely the techno-meritocratic culture, the virtual communitarians, the hacker culture and the entrepreneurs. For different reasons, these cultures require open access, and, as a result, democratic opportunities are built into the technology of communication.

Two norms have emerged from these technological requirements: namely, the right to horizontal communication and access to knowledge, and the right to unimpeded self-steering. In some respects, these freedoms of access and movement match the liberal rights of the marketplace. Individuals should have the right to unrestricted access to the net (a market of information), and they should be free to negotiate their way through the net without (undue) interference. These 'net-rights' are a product of the technological characteristics of the Internet and the contradictory interests of the elites who attempt to own and manage global knowledge. Interestingly, these net rights also reflect the news structures of authority that are arising in the religious field where horizontal rather than vertical authority is a critical feature and where the value of self-expressivity over tradition is the dominant theme.

Diasporic Islam and glocal authority

For Islam, globalisation has involved migration and the creation of diasporic communities. The Internet provides an obvious method for dialogue within and between such diasporic groups, but the unintended consequence

is often that diasporic politics and their intellectual elites come to depart radically from local traditions, building up their own notions of authority, authenticity and continuity. The Internet holds the diasporic community together across space and then challenges traditional authority, which is typically a print-based authority. Although the new media have had important consequences for the Middle East as a region, it is often in the diaspora that the democratic effects of the media have their most important effects.

Many young Muslims bypass their local *ulama* and *imams* in order to learn about Islam in English from pamphlets and sources such as *The Muslim News* and *Q-News*. The majority of Muslim users of the Internet are resident in Europe and North America. These diasporic internet users are typically students in Western universities undertaking technical degrees in engineering, chemistry and computing. There is an important affinity between their scientific backgrounds and their neo-fundamentalist interpretations of Islam. Because internet access is often too expensive to be available in many communities in the Middle East, Asia and Africa, it is, again, the student population of Western universities who are accessing the Internet for religious and political purposes. There is evidence that the Internet is used by radical activists to promote terrorism against the West, but it can also promote reasoned argument in a context where everybody can, in principle, check the sources for themselves. In the absence of firm criteria by which information can be guaranteed by recognised institutions, young Muslims are inclined to generate their own standards.²⁶ Much of this internet discussion is about the proper conduct and piety required by a 'good Muslim' in new contexts and circumstances. The majority of sites are not developed by official Muslim organisations such as the Muslim World League. Alternative Muslim sites provide opportunities for discussion outside the official culture, and, consequently, the Internet is a means of bypassing the traditional gatekeepers of Muslim orthodoxy.

The Internet has only served to reinforce an existing the problem of authority. Within the Muslim diaspora where young Muslims face new problems relating to personal conduct, the new intellectuals create personal websites, providing religious or ethical rulings on various questions relating to religious conduct. These e-mail *fatwas* are not recognised by shariah courts as admissible evidence, and they cannot be readily enforced, but they clearly have an influence within the diaspora. They become authoritative as users can compare these rulings against other sites and e-fatwas. In summary, the Internet is an important technology for creating an imagined community for individuals and groups that are separated from their homeland and exist in alien secular cultures that are often hostile to Islam. These internet sites also serve to reinforce the individualism which many observers have associated with neo-fundamentalism because, 'The virtual *umma* of the internet is the perfect place for individuals to express themselves while claiming to belong to a community to whose enactment they contribute to the enacting of, rather than being passive members of it.'²⁷

Muslim communities now participate actively in a global civil society, but what are the implications of this public sphere?²⁸ We have considered the impact of the Internet on diasporic communities in the West which employ the new media to sustain links with their traditions and homeland and to create new imagined communities, but what happens when these technologies are exported back into their homelands? While many Arab governments and business communities want the social and economic benefits of the Internet, they also fear its negative consequences in terms of the introduction of pornography, secular values or political opposition. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Iran are trying to control the content of e-mail communication to insure these channels are consistent with Muslim orthodoxy in the region and do not challenge the existing regime. While members of the royal family in Saudi Arabia have made lucrative profits from the sale and installation of satellite dishes, satellite television can also be used to import material that is critical of the regime. The complex interaction between global, translocal and local Muslim traditions and politics serves to amplify the heterogeneity of perspectives within modern Islam.

We can see parallels between the rise of a new print culture and religious debates in seventeenth-century Puritanism and the rise of the printing industry and religious debates in Islam and the rise of the World Wide Web. While in 1890, Al-Afghani used the telegraph to maintain communication with oppositional movements across the Middle East, today the offices of Muslim activists, fundamentalist mullahs and Sufi sheiks are crammed with radios, televisions, fax machines, computers and mobile phones. The cross-fertilisation of the media that is producing a new world of political debate is also creating a new type of consciousness in which 'just as there was no history when there was no linear time sense, so there is post-history now when everything that ever was in the world becomes simultaneously present to our consciousness'.²⁹ Similarly, what Richard Rorty has called the end of grand narratives to guide human society creates significant problems for traditional (religious) authority in a world of simulated or post-modern realities.³⁰

Conclusion: diasporic communities and the new individualism

One problem of authority in modern society is that the erosion of communal bonds has undercut what Durkheim saw as essential to the authority of sacred tradition: the inclusion of the individual in enduring social structures and the reproduction of tradition from one generation the next. In a traditional culture, religious experiences were mediated by social collectivities through ecclesiastical or similar institutions, but in the contemporary world the subjectivity of individual experience is not mediated by such stable structures. Orthodox belief is increasingly questioned by an educated laity that finds doctrinal rigidity and precision problematic, and the collective structures of authorities that ultimately found their justification in these constructions of religious knowledge are becoming marginal to everyday experience. In

the Christian case, perhaps the conservative epoch of Roman Catholicism under the guidance of the late Pope John Paul might be an exception to the rule in a context where orthodoxy was stoutly defended by a reinvigorated hierarchy. However, the controversies in the Catholic Church after the death of Pope over homosexuality, birth control and married priests suggest that he failed to heal the deep rift between liberals and conservatives in the Church. The current crisis of Catholicism is precisely and only a crisis of who has authority to speak. The condition of modern Islam is similar, but it takes place within a tradition that has no pope, no priests and no church as such.

Religious life is increasingly organised at the individual level. Sociologists of American religion have referred to the emergence of a quest culture, where individual satisfaction and conviction are the only test of authority and authenticity.³¹ In this context of what we might call 'hyper-individualism', the presence of law may play a decisive role in stabilising religious belief and knowledge. While there is no shared word for 'law' in the Indo-European languages, there is a common notion of 'order' that underpins the law-like orderliness of nature, the relations between gods and men and social relations. The root of this concept is the stem *ar-*, which in Greek forms the word *ararisko* (to fit, adapt or harmonise) or in Latin *artis* (signifying a natural disposition, qualification or talent). This conceptual paradigm in which 'law' is subsumed under 'order' recognises no distinction between secular laws, rituals and religion. In terms of specific concepts of law, in Sanskrit, *dharma* signifies what is held fast according to custom or usage. In Latin, the concept of *Themis* refers to the ordinances or code that is inspired by the gods, including the unwritten laws of the community. From this perspective, we can see that both law and religion refer to custom, to one's place in the world and to order. In sociological terms, the social norms of a community are merely manifestations of a larger *Nomos* that protects people from the threat of disorder or chaos. However, the traditional *Nomos* is no longer secure, and the disciplinary practices that sustained it are no longer in place, but, as yet, we do not have an adequate vocabulary to rethink existing notions of author, authority and authenticity in the debate about the status of religious knowledge and belief in a secular information environment.³² In its place, there is the burgeoning world of self expressivity and personal realisation as a new form of spirituality.

Notes

- 1 The reform of Islamic thought in this period was recorded in A. Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age 1798–1939*, London: Oxford University Press, 1962. The classic study of Muhammad 'Abuh is A. Charles, *Islam and Modernism in Egypt*, London and New York: Routledge, 2000.
- 2 Aspects this argument have been published in a special issue of the journal B. Turner and F. Vopli, 'Introduction: Making Islamic Authority Matter', *Theory Culture & Society*, 2007, Vol. 24, No. 2, pp. 1–19.

- 3 On the new spirituality in the West, see S. Hunt, *Religion in Everyday Life*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2005; and W.C. Roof, *Spiritual Marketplace: Baby Boomers and the Remaking of American Religion*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999.
- 4 Aspects of these social and political changes that provided the context for the Muslim Brothers are analysed in S. Humphreys, *Between Memory and Desire: The Middle East in a Troubled Age*, Cairo: The American University of Cairo Press, 2000.
- 5 The educational transformation of Iran is described in D. Menashri, *Education and the Making of Modern Iran*, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1992.
- 6 For a general account of these ideological changes see H.E. Chehabi, *Iranian Politics and Religious Modernism: The Liberation Movement of Iran under the Shah and Khomeini*, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1990. On Ali Shariati, see A. Rahnema, *An Islamic Utopian: A Political Biography of Ali Shariati*, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004. The influence of Marxism is reflected in A. Shariati, *Marxism and Other Western Fallacies*, Berkeley, Calif.: Mizan Press, 1980.
- 7 For a general discussion of the modernisation of Islamic thought in Iran, see F. Vahdat, *God and Juggernaut: Iran's Intellectual Encounter with Modernity*, Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2002.
- 8 The impact of new information technologies on Islamic thought has been the topic of an extensive literature. See, in particular, D. Eickelman and J. Piscatori, *Muslim Politics*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996; D. Eickelman and J. Anderson (eds), *New Media in the Muslim World: The Emerging Public Sphere*, Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2003; and G. Starrett, *Putting Islam to Work: Education, Politics and Religious Transformation in Egypt*, Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1998.
- 9 The key work on the rise and possible fall of political Islam is G. Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam*, London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2002. For a general account of religious resurgence, see his *The Revenge of God: The Resurgence of Islam, Christianity and Judaism in the Modern World* Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004.
- 10 For an overview of the politics of the region, see G. Achcar, *Eastern Cauldron: Islam, Afghanistan, Palestine and Iraq in a Marxist Mirror*, London: Pluto Press, 2004.
- 11 On the new intellectuals, see O. Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996. and K.D. Crow, 'Nurturing Islamic Peace Discourse', *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, 2000, Vol. 17, No. 3, pp. 54–69.
- 12 For an account of these global dislocations in the social and political order, see B. Tibi, *The Challenge of Fundamentalism: Political Islam and the New World Order*, Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1998.
- 13 See Vahdat, *God and Juggernaut* and Mahmoud Sadri and Ahmad Sadri (eds), *The Essential Writings of Abdolkarim Soroush: Reason Freedom and Democracy in Islam*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- 14 The principal work of deconstruction is in M. Arkoun, *The Unthought in Contemporary Islamic Thought*, London: Saqi Books, 2002. See also his *Lectures du Coran*, Paris: Maisonneuve and Larose, 1982.
- 15 The idea of an expressive revolution in the 1960s was originally explored by T. Parsons in 'Religion in Postindustrial America: The Problem of Secularization', *Social Research*, Vol. 41. No. 3, 1974, pp. 193–225.
- 16 The history of the idea of the self was explored in C. Taylor, *The Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989. This issue is further considered in C. Taylor, *Varieties of Religion Today: William James Revisted* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press,

2002. For the original discussion of religious experience, see W. James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study of Human Nature*, London: Longmans Green, 1922.
- 17 E. Durkheim's *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, London: Allen & Unwin, 1954, which was published in France in 1912, remains one of the most influential accounts of the social functions of religion as the basis of social solidarity. A modern translation by Carol Cosman was published by Oxford University Press in 2001.
- 18 This legacy of Max Weber was developed controversially in Weimar Germany by C. Schmitt. See his *Legality and Legitimacy*, Durham, Md.: Duke University Press, 2004.
- 19 On contemporary changes in the shariah in Malaysia and Indonesia, see J. Bowen, *Islam, Law and Indonesia: An Anthropology of Public Reasoning* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. See also the special issue of *Islamic Law and Society*, Vol. 12, No. 1, 2005 on *fatwas* in Indonesia. On politics and Islam in Malaysia, P.A. Martinez, 'The Islamic State or the State of Islam in Malaysia', *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Vol. 23, No. 3, 2001, pp. 139–73 and, on the *hudud* laws, Shad Saleem Faruqi, 'The Malaysian Constitution, the Islamic State and *Hudud* laws', in K.S. Nathan and M. Hashim Kamali (eds), *Islam in South East Asia*, Singapore: ISEAS, 2005, pp. 256–77.
- 20 The idea of a technology of the self in religious practice, see M. Foucault, *Ethics*, London: Allen Lane, 1997, pp. 223–51.
- 21 The theory of charismatic power is presented in M. Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1978, Vol. II.
- 22 The limitations of American control over the media is explained in M. Mann, *Incoherent Empire*, London: Verso, 2003.
- 23 A general discussion of dissent in modern China is presented in M. Goldman, *From Comrade to Citizen: The Struggle for Political Rights in China*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005.
- 24 Weber, *Economy and Society*. For a general account of Weber's political sociology, see W. Mommsen, *Max Weber and German Politics 1890–1920*, Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1984.
- 25 M. Castells, *The Rise of Network Society*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1996. For a critical assessment, see B. Turner and C. Rojek, *Society and Culture: Principles of Scarcity and Solidarity*, London: Sage, 2001, pp. 160–70.
- 26 P. Mandaville, *Transnational Muslim Politics*, London and New York: Routledge, 2001, p. 168.
- 27 O. Roy, *Globalised Islam: The Search for a New Ummah*, London: Hurst & Company, 2004, p. 183.
- 28 For an account of the idea of a public sphere or civil society, see J. Keane, *Civil Society: Old Images, New Visions*, Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998 and J. Alexander, *The Civil Sphere*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- 29 M. McLuhan, *Counter Blast*, London: Rapp and Whiting, 1970, p. 122.
- 30 R. Rorty has described postmodernism as the loss of a final vocabulary in various works, but the most influential has been *Contingency Irony and Solidarity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- 31 For an overview, see L. Woodhead and P. Heelas (eds), *Religion in Modern Times: An Interpretative Anthology*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2000.
- 32 The idea that religion is a 'sacred canopy' that provides a general meaning for life and a shield against moral chaos was launched in sociological terms by P. Berger in his *The Social Reality of Religion*, London: Faber and Faber, 1967.

5 Attempts to use the Ottoman Caliphate as the legitimator of British rule in India

Azmi Özcan

The establishment of British power in the Subcontinent had an adverse effect, primarily upon Muslims. Not only did they lose political supremacy but they also felt that their cultural entity was at stake with the following political, administrative, legal and educational changes introduced throughout the country.

The loss of political power and subsequent breakdown of traditional community prompted a search for a psychological centre on the part of Indian Muslims and, consequently, enhanced their attachment to the then most powerful Muslim state, the Ottoman Empire. Since the idea of the universal Ottoman Caliphate had successfully spread among the Muslims of the Subcontinent, it was only natural for them to show a certain degree of concern and interest in the welfare of the Ottoman Empire. The Indo-Muslim orthodoxy, especially of the Waliullahi *ulama*, took the lead and championed the Ottoman cause.¹ As a matter of fact, the concept of Islamic universalism is inherent in the faith, finding its roots in the verses of Qur'an and the traditions of the Prophet. What was conspicuous was that appeals for the unity and solidarity of Muslims around the world came especially after Muslims started losing their former political supremacy. The last enduring Muslim state, the Ottomans and their sultan as the Caliph almost naturally appeared as a rallying centre with every fresh encroachment of European powers. The initial contacts of the Indian Muslims with the Ottomans started right after the conquest of Istanbul in the mid-fifteenth century. Documents preserved in the Ottoman archives show that rulers of south Indian states at the time sent a letter of congratulations and expressed their felicitations. This was followed by political and military cooperation against the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean. While doing so, the Indians exalted the Ottoman sultans as the 'shadow of God on earth, the pillars of Islam, perfection in the Caliphate and religion.' There were also cultural factors that contributed to these developments, such as the exchange of books, religious literature, the role of Sufis, emissaries and, later, newspapers.² Hence, by the end of the eighteenth century, the Indian Muslim attachment to Ottomans became an acknowledged reality.

Politically, the British were also responsible for popularising the Ottomans, of course for different purposes. Since Britain had friendly relations with the Ottomans up to the second half of the nineteenth century, she made good use of this friendship at times for preventing Muslim resistance in India, or at another times to curb the Russian designs towards India by forming a Muslim bloc in Asia. In India, particular instances were recorded during the British expansion in South India when the Muslim kingdoms of the region turned to the Ottomans and appealed for help in their struggle against the British in the late eighteenth century.³ The Porte, however, regretted that it could not help due to the long distance separating their lands but offered to intervene between them and England.⁴

In the same manner, the ruler of Mysore, Tipu Sultan sought Ottoman help against British domination.⁵ Among the several missions he sent to Turkey from 1784 onwards, the most remarkable was one in 1786 with 700 men and extraordinarily rich and abundant gifts.⁶ The significant part of this mission, in addition to the request for military and commercial alliances, was his desire to receive a caliphal investiture from the Ottoman Sultan.

To achieve his aims, Tipu Sultan appealed to many religious motives in his letter. He informed the Sultan that about 10,000 Muslim children had been forcibly converted to Christianity and many mosques and Muslim cemeteries had been destroyed and turned into churches. In view of this and his religious responsibility, he had opted for jihad and had won many victories against the Christians. He requested that they should enter into a friendly alliance under which the Sultan should send troops and other military experts to help Tipu Sultan.⁷

Unfortunately for Tipu Sultan, his mission to Istanbul coincided with the war between the Ottomans and the Russians in 1787. Under the circumstances, the Porte could not afford to antagonise Britain by responding favourably to Tipu Sultan's proposal of an alliance.⁸ Therefore, the Sultan advised him to maintain peace with the British.⁹ Soon after, in 1792, Tipu Sultan suffered a heavy defeat against British forces. In order to avenge himself and recover his lost territories, Tipu Sultan sought new allies. This time, it was the French. However, the French occupation of Egypt in 1798 on the way to India alarmed the British Government, who then appealed to the Ottoman Sultan, Selim III (1789–1807), as the 'acknowledged Head of the Mohammedan Church' to send a letter to Tipu Sultan to advise him not to fight against the British.¹⁰

Accordingly, the Sultan criticised the French action in Egypt and emphasised that the true aim of the French was to colonise the whole Muslim world and thus to destroy Islam. The French had sent an army to Tipu Sultan not to help him but to occupy India. The Porte declared that since France was the enemy of Islam, his duty was to protect India from the French. But if there was any danger of a British attack against Tipu, the Sultan could help to prevent this by acting as an intermediary between

them. However, Tipu Sultan went on fighting with the British and was killed on the battlefield in 1799.¹¹

The fact that the British had requested Selim III to advise Tipu Sultan clearly shows that the Ottoman Sultans had considerable influence in India in their capacity as caliphs. It also strengthens the view that the Ottoman Sultans were regarded as caliphs of all Muslims by a foreign non-Muslim power like the British. Another significant aspect of the matter was that this was the first occasion that the British had approached the Ottoman Sultan for help using his caliphal status. In the following years, the British were repeatedly to use the Sultan's influence over the Muslims to their advantage.

The outbreak of the Crimean war in 1853, in which the Ottomans fought against the Russians in alliances with the British and French, was the event during which Indo-Muslim sympathy and concern for the Ottomans was evidently demonstrated en masse through various means. The Sultan Caliph enjoyed all esteem and reverence hitherto paid to the 'Amirul-Muminin'. For the 'Sooltan of Room', wrote the Marquess of Dalhousie, the Governor General of India, 'great interest and excitement are felt by all the Mussulman population in India, especially on the western frontier.' The Indian Muslims were jubilant that England had taken side with the Ottomans. Hence, they found themselves free to express their feelings of sympathy for the Ottomans and their goodwill for the British Indian Government.¹² The Government was obviously quite satisfied with the public spirit in India and did not miss the opportunity to try to impress the Indian Muslims by posing as the defender of the Sultan Caliph.¹³ It was now very clear that the notion of the Caliphate was emerging as a major mobilising factor among the Indian Muslims. The British were to take full advantage of a short time, after 1857.

Indeed, during the Mutiny, the British made full use of the help they had given to the Ottomans during the Crimean war. They first obtained permission from the Porte for the passage of their troops to India through Egypt and Suez.¹⁴ According to the British ambassador in Istanbul, the Sultan 'condemned and abhorred the atrocities committed by the Mutineers,' and said, 'I judged [...] Mahometans [*sic*] unfairly, if I did not consider them as entertaining his own sentiments towards England. They would not forget the assistance afforded them [the Ottomans] by Her Majesty's forces in the late war. Animosity was no longer indulged between Islamism and Christianity.'¹⁵

The successes of the British troops and the capture of Delhi were reported to have been met with pleasure and a 'cordial expression of satisfaction' by the Ottomans and a message of congratulation was sent to the British Government.¹⁶ In the meantime, the Porte donated 1,000 pounds to the Mutiny relief fund for orphans, widows and wounded soldiers.¹⁷

No doubt the Sultan had a remarkable influence over the Indian Muslims, which was also acknowledged by the British Prime Minister, Palmerston.

He told the Ottoman Ambassador that the attitude taken by the Sultan during and after the Mutiny 'would affect immensely the Indo-Muslim public opinion which regards His Majesty as the highest leader in their sect (mazhab).'¹⁸ But the spiritual hold enjoyed by the Sultan over the Indian Muslims can perhaps be best illustrated by the words of Salar Jung, the Prime Minister of Hyderabad. He wrote:

England has in India some fifty millions of Moslem subjects, including in their mass the most war-like of the native races [...] and England is not likely to forget that it was these very races who, in 1857, at the bidding of their caliph, the Sultan Abdul Mejid, gave their united support to the British connection at that supreme moment when their defection might have cost the life of every white man and woman in India. My late father frequently assured me that the whole influence of the caliphate was used most unremittingly from Constantinople to check the spread of mutiny, to rally round the English standards the Mussulman races of India – and that in this way the debt that Turkey owed to Great Britain for British support in the Crimea was paid in full.¹⁹

This statement of Salar Jang corroborates the claims that during the mutiny the British secured a proclamation from the Sultan, as Caliph, advising the Indian Muslims not to fight against them. This proclamation was reported to have been circulated and read in the mosques of India. Another testimony to this effect was that Khawaja Kemaluddin, writing in 1922, stated that, 'There are thousands of Muslims still alive in India who heard the *ferman* of Sultan read to them.'²⁰

As the Mutiny marked the loss of the last vestiges of Muslim power in the Subcontinent, it was naturally a great blow to the Indian Muslims. They were accused of an uprising that had served to justify deeply entrenched British suspicion that the Muslims were aggressive, militant, and dangerous. By contrast, the Hindus were regarded as less hostile for they had 'no king to set up and no religion to be propagated by the sword.'²¹

It seemed that all sections of the Muslim community received their due share of British reprisals. Consequently, the Muslims emerged, after 1857, to find themselves left behind in various fields. Even worse, they were left without guidance from the *ulama* whose power had been crushed. Some of those who had survived left the country to escape British reprisals and search for a new centre. Prominent among them were Moulana Rahmatullah Kairanwi (1818–91), Haji Imdadullah (1817–99), Abdul Ghani (d. 1878), Muhammed Yakub (b. 1832), and Khairuddin (1831–1908). They migrated to Mecca and some even went to Istanbul.²²

This psychological state brought the Indian Muslims even closer to the Ottomans. Since there was no Muslim sovereign left in India, the Ottoman Sultan Caliph appeared to be the natural focus for the emotional and

spiritual attachment of the rank-and-file Indian Muslims. Thus followed the inclusion of the Ottoman Sultan's name in the Friday *Khutbas*. According to a document in the Ottoman archives, this practice started in some cities, as well as small towns and villages of India, soon after the Mutiny, possibly in 1862–3.²³

The same document also described British India as *Daru'l-Islam* on the authority of the Meccan *ulama*. It was, in fact, in accordance with this ruling that the Muslim jurists of Mecca issued a fatwa that the Friday prayers could be performed in India, including the *khutba* in the name of the Sultan. It appears that the fatwa was issued in response to a request made by the Indian Muslims regarding the legal status of India under non-Muslim rule and their inquiry as to whether the Friday prayers could be performed.²⁴ The reason why the Indian Muslims needed to consult Meccan *ulama* is obvious. Since the beginning of the British advance in India, there were a number of *ulama*, especially among the Waliullahi School, who were of the opinion that India was *Daru'l-Harb* and, therefore, jihad was incumbent upon the Muslims when opportune. In 1857, most of the *ulama* believed that the opportunity had come to declare jihad against the British, and the fatwa to this effect signed by thirty-four *ulama* in the Delhi Juma mosque was later published in the *Urdu Akhbar*.²⁵ However, the aftermath of 1857 witnessed a controversy among them as to whether or not India was still *Daru'l-Islam* and whether fatwa was lawful. This debate continued until well into the 1870s.²⁶ Those who still held that India was *Daru'l-Harb* either emigrated or simply kept quiet, for they saw no other alternative. But since the British did not interfere with the religious practices of the Muslims, some *ulama*, including the Meccan jurists, believed that India under British rule was *Daru'l-Islam*.²⁷ Strangely enough, however, the fiercest criticism of the latter came not from the Muslims but from an Englishman, Dr Hunter, but for different reasons. After the killing of Chief Justice Norman of the Calcutta High Court on 20 September 1871 by a Muslim, Hunter was asked to write a report on the burning question of the day: whether the Indian Muslims were compelled by their faith to rebel against the British rule. Having had full access to secret official papers and studied the concept of jihad, issues relating to jihad movement and the Wahhabi concepts, etc., he compiled his report in 1871 entitled, *The Indian Musalmans: Are They Bound in Conscience to Rebel against the Queen?*²⁸

He stated that

The present generation of Musalmans are bound according to their own texts to accept the status quo, but 'the law and the prophets can be utilized on the side of loyalty as well as on the side of sedition, [...]. It was hopeless to look for anything like enthusiastic loyalty from our Muhammadan subjects. The whole Koran was based upon the conception of the Musalmans as a conquering and not as a conquered people. The

Musalmans of India could always be a source of chronic danger to the British power in India.'

And he concluded that 'The truth is that, according to strict Muhammadan Law, the opposite conclusion (ie. *dar-al harb*) would be correct. Had India remained a country of Islam... a large portion of the orthodox sect would have deemed themselves bound to rebel.'²⁹

Since the British turned fiercely on Muslims as their real enemies and used all harsh methods to put an end to the jihad movement, which they held 'seditious Wahabis' had launched in India,³⁰ undoubtedly the remarks of Hunter represented their distrust of Muslims. His report (published as a book also) caused a great sensation in India, and many attempts were made by Muslims to neutralise its reservations about Muslim loyalty.³¹ While doing so, it is striking to note that some *ulama* drew their conclusions from the friendly relations of the Ottoman Sultan Caliph with the British. Most remarkable was the Moulvi Fazl Ali who, at a meeting held by Moulvi Abdul Latif's Muhammadan Literary Society of Calcutta, argued that the 'Sultan of Turkey' was superior to other Muslim rulers in the world since he 'has the honor of being the Khadim or servant of the Holy Cities of Mecca and Medina; and all Mahomedans look upon him as the Head of their religion, and as he enjoys cordial and friendly relations with the British Government, jihad against the British nation is unlawful.'³²

Clearly, even such examples of extreme interpretation of Islamic law would be enough to show not only the value of the Sultan's friendly attitude to Britain but also the extent of the influence and prestige that the Sultan had among Indian Muslims. It was, of course, a very welcome asset for the British, which they had made full use of from the times of Tipu Sultan. The Ottoman response to this was even more encouraging and satisfactory for the British. Ali Paşa, the Grand Vizier, was reported to have told Elliot, the British Ambassador, in 1869, that the Indian Muslims enjoyed 'a thorough religious liberty with all the advantages of a strong and enlightened government.' He even assured the ambassador that the Porte would never countenance any attempt by the Indian Muslims to harm British interests.³³ This must have been a relief for the British because, as was repeatedly admitted, Muslim loyalty from then on depended greatly on the policy of the British Government towards the Ottomans. As long as there were friendly relations between the two countries, there was nothing to fear. But if, on the contrary, the Muslims saw the British encroach upon the Ottomans, according to Lytton, the Viceroy in the 1870s, Britain had to reckon with a real jihad all round her frontier. 'In every Anglo-Indian home there would be a traitor, a foe, and possibly an assassin. Such a danger might possibly be more difficult to deal with than the mutiny which cost us such an effort to suppress.'³⁴ This wording might be termed as an over-exaggeration on the part of Lytton, for he was implicitly trying to influence the British Government in London to support the Ottomans

against the Russia. But, still, there must have been some truth in it, and the British always kept this in mind when dealing with the Ottomans – hence the deterioration of British relations with the Ottomans, especially after the 1880s. The erstwhile policy of bolstering the Ottoman Caliphate among the Muslim subjects was to change to undermining its legal authenticity by claiming that the Ottomans had no religious sanction for their title of caliphate.

Notes

- 1 For example, Shah Muhammed Ishaq (1778–1846), the grandson of Shah Waliullah, migrated to Mecca in 1841 from where he constantly propagated the Ottoman cause among the Indian Muslims. A. Ahmad, *Studies in Islamic Culture in the Indian Environment*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964, p. 63; I.H. Qureshi, *Ulema in Politics*, Karachi: Ma'reef, 1972, pp. 219–20.
- 2 Şehbender Defteri, 1802–79, Vol. I, pp. 41–2, Ottoman Archives; Foreign Department. Poll. 10 February 1849, Nos 1–8, *National Archives of India*; I.H. Qureshi, 'Two Native Papers of Pre-Mutiny India', *Indian Historical Record Commission*. Proceedings of Meetings, Vol. XVIII, (held in Mysore, January 1942), Delhi, 1944, p. 258. For further details on the history of Indo-Turkish relations, see my *Pan-Islamism, Indian Muslims, The Ottomans and Britain, 1877–1924*, Leiden: Brill, 1997.
- 3 In his letter, Sultan of Malabar Ali Raja stated that the Porte (the term 'Porte' is the French translation of the Ottoman term 'Bab-ı Ali', which was the centre of the ruling power in the Ottoman Empire) had sent them some military assistance 240 years ago and that he had been fighting the infidels for the past forty years. However, since the Porte was still under the heavy burden of the late war with Russia, which was ended by the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca in 1774, it was unable to help. Name Defteri, No. 9, pp. 80–1, Ottoman Archives, cited in İ.H. Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, Vol. IV, Part II, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1982, p. 156.
- 4 Name Defteri, No. 9, pp. 99, 169, Ottoman Archives, cited in İ.H. Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, Vol. IV, Part II, p. 157; see also K.K.N. Kurup, 'A Letter from the Ottoman Emperor to the Bibi of Arakkal', *Journal of Kerala Studies*, Vol. I, 1973, pp. 105–8.
- 5 On Haidar Ali and his Kingdom, see L.B. Bowring, *Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan: The Struggle with the Mussulman Powers of the South*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1893; Dennys Forrest, *Tiger of Mysore: The Life and Death of Tipu Sultan*, London: Chatto & Windus, 1970; İrfan Habib (ed.) *State and Diplomacy under Tipu Sultan*, Delhi: Tulika Books, 2001.
- 6 Name Defteri, No. 9, p. 178, Ottoman Empire. For the detailed analysis of the correspondence, Y.H. Bayur, 'Tipu Sultan ile Osmanlı Padişahlarından I. Abdülhamid ile III. Selim Arasındaki Mektuplaşma', *Belleten*, Vol. XLVI, 1948, pp. 619–54; I.H. Qureshi, *The Muslim Community of the Indo-Pakistan Sub-continent*, Karachi: Maaref, 1977, p. 310. Persian text and its Turkish translation is in Name Defteri, No. 9, pp. 209–11, *Ottoman Archives*; see also, for the summary of the letter, Y.H. Bayur, 'Maysor Sultanı Tipu ile Osmanlı Padişahlarından I. Abdülhamid ve III. Selim Arasındaki Mektuplaşma', *Belleten*, Vol. XII, No. 47, Türk Tarih Kurumu, Ankara 1948, pp. 619–54; İ.H. Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, Vol. IV, Part II, pp. 161–2.
- 7 Ibid.; Y.H. Bayur, 'Tipu Sultan ile...', pp. 630–2; see also I.H. Qureshi, 'The Purpose of Tipu Sultan's Embassy to Constantinople', *Journal of Indian History*, 1945, Vol. XXIV, No. 70–72, pp. 77–84.

- 8 M.H. Khan, *History of Tipu Sultan*, Calcutta: Bibliophile, 1951, p. 137; İ.H. Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, pp. 186–7.
- 9 Y.H. Bayur, *Hindistan Tarihi*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1950, Vol. III, p. 196. But Tipu Sultan was allowed to have his name included in the Khutba. See for the text of the Khutba read in Tipu's kingdom, M. Husain, 'Tipu Sultan and the Friday Sermon: A note on Muayyadu'l-Mujahidin', *Journal of Pakistan Historical Society*, 1955, Vol. III, pp. 287–95. Muayyadu'l-Mujahidin is a collection of fifty-two *Khutbas* read each week in Tipu's kingdom. For the original Persian text see, *Catalogue of Persian Manuscripts*, Vol. I, p. 145, Nos 2619, 2620, India Office Records.
- 10 İ.H. Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, Vol. II, Part II, p. 163; Syed Mahmud, *The Khilafat and England*, Patna: Mohemd Imtyaz, 1922, p. 77. The letter was sent through Lord Wellesley, the British Governor General of India. The text is in Y.H. Bayur, *Hindistan Tarihi*, 1950, Vol. III, pp. 205–6.
- 11 İ.H. Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, Vol. IV, p. 164. In reply to this communication, Tipu Sultan wrote twice to the Ottoman Sultan in a manner which apparently did not please Selim III. In his second letter Tipu stated that if the French were the enemies of Islam and the Sultan, Muslims should not be friendly with them. But since the British were the invaders in his country he could not be expected to change his attitude towards them.
- 12 J.G.A. Baird, *Private Letters of the Marquess of Dalhousie*, London: Blackwood, 1910, p. 295.
- 13 But Dalhousie still had reservations about the British support of the Ottomans.

I can not think, if we are defeated, it will be because we sustain the Turk. We are not fighting to sustain the religion of the Prophet: We are fighting to thwart the policy of the Czar. [...] If in order to thwart that policy we uphold politically a power which holds a false religion, I can not see that we can be considered to uphold false religion against true [...] the blessing of God will rest upon us, who strike for the peace and the freedom of mankind, though the continuance of the Crescent will be the direct consequence of our success.

(*ibid.*, p. 301)

- 14 'It is of great importance to send troops to India through Egypt. Ask permission of the Porte [...] as we can not doubt that permission is given.' Earl of Clarendon to Redcliffe, 3 October 1857, Foreign Office, 78/1271. Redcliffe to Clarendon, 3 October 1857, Foreign Office, 78/1271, Public Record Office. The British Government thanked the Porte for the permission, İrade Hariciye, No. 7906 of 1274, Ottoman Archives, but the route was not used due to technical reasons. Y.H. Bayur, *Hindistan Tarihi*, 1950, Vol. III, p. 317.
- 15 *Extract of a Dispatch from Lord Stratford de Redcliffe*, 2 December 1858, Foreign Department, Sec. 2 January 1858, No. 1910, National Archives of India.
- 16 The British Government informed the Porte about the capture of Delhi and the quelling of the Mutiny, İrade Hariciye, 7903, Lef, 1, Ottoman Archives. See, for the congratulations to the British Government, Redcliffe to Earl of Clarendon, 28 October 1857, Foreign Office, Poll. 9 December 1857, No. 45, National Archives of India.
- 17 İrade Hariciye, No. 7750, 7802 of 1274, Ottoman Archives. About the effect of this donation, the Ottoman Ambassador in London wrote that because of the reports that the Muslims were responsible for the mutiny, there had been an anti-Muslim campaign in Britain. Consequently, the enemies of the Sublime State tried to take advantage of it. But the Sultan's timely donation to the Mutiny Relief Fund not only made these mischievous attempts ineffective but also created favourable feelings in Britain.

- 18 İrade Hariciye, No. 7894, lef, 1, Ottoman Archives.
- 19 Salar Jung, 'Europe Revisited', *Nineteenth Century*, December 1887, p. 503.
- 20 Khawaja Kemaluddin, *India in the Balance: British Rule and the Caliphate*, Woking, 1922, p. 123. See also my, '1857 Büyük Hind Ayaklanması ve Osmanlı Devleti,' *İstanbul Üniversitesi İslam Tetkikleri Dergisi*, Vol. DC, 1995, pp. 269–80.
- 21 This was even epitomised in the verdict of the Court Martial: 'If we now take a retrospective view of the various circumstances which we have been able to elicit during our extended inquiries, we shall perceive how exclusively Muhammadan are all the prominent points that attach to it.' Kaye and Malleson, *History of the Indian Mutiny of 1857–1858*, London: W.H. Allen & Co., 1888, Vol. V, Appendix C, p. 340.
- 22 Among them Rahmatullah Kairanwi was specially invited to Istanbul by Sultan Abdulhamid II in 1883. By that time, Kairanwi's fame had reached Istanbul for his works against the Christian missionaries. One of his books, *Izharu'l-Haq*, was also translated into Turkish by Hayreddin Paşa, the Grand Vizier. However, because Kairanwi was involved in the Mutiny, the British Embassy in Istanbul communicated to the Porte, by instruction of the Foreign Office, their protest that 'a notorious rebel of Indian Mutiny' was treated honourably. Moulvi Kairanwi lived in Mecca until his death in 1891 where he set up a *madrasa* for higher education. In 1883, he applied to the Indian Government to be permitted to return to India, but was refused. Foreign Department. A. Poll. E, April 1884, Nos 148–55; Foreign Department, Sec. F, November 1884, Nos 243–53, National Archives of India; Yıldız Sadaret Hususi Maruzat, No. 160/36; dated 25, Z, 1296 (1878), Ottoman Archives. On Rahmatullah and his work also see, A.A. Povel, 'Maulana Rahmat Allah Kairanwi and Muslim-Christian Controversy in India in the Mid-19th Century', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1976, Vol. I, pp. 42–63.
- 23 M.A. Chaudry, *The Emergence of Pakistan*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1967, p. 7; see also, H. Malik, *Muslim Nationalism in India and Pakistan*, Washington D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1963, p. 208.
- 24 The fatwa was updated by the Meccan Muftis every two to three years. Yıldız Esas Evrakı, No. 30, 1499, 51, 78, Ottoman Archives. The *daru'l-Islam* is a territory where Muslim law and rule is supreme and *daru'l-harb* where it is not, especially in matters of worship and security of life and property. According to the Hanafi school of thought which the Muslims of India follow predominantly, three conditions are necessary under which *daru'l-Islam* becomes *daru'l-harb*:
 1. The laws of disbelievers gain supremacy and the law of Islam can not be executed.
 2. The Muslim and non-Muslim populations are no longer governed by the original pacts that they enjoyed before the non-Muslim occupation.
 3. The land in question is adjacent to the territory of *daru'l-harb* so that there is no land of Islam between them.
- 25 See *Sadiqu'l-Akhbar*, 26 July 1857. The text is also available in A. Malik, *Safahat aur Tahrik-i Azadi*, Lahore, 1984, pp. 18–19. It was reported that the British procured the Ottoman Sultan's above-mentioned letter to counteract this fatwa. Syed Ahmad Khan claimed that this fatwa was a forgery. See, *The Causes of the Indian Revolt*, London: Medical Hall Press, 1873, pp. 18–19. See M.N. Qureshi, *Pan-Islam in British Indian Politics*, pp. 19–20.
- 26 Basically, the issue was about the status of Muslims living under non-Muslim rule. Because Muslims on the whole right from the beginning lived as the dominant force up until the fall of Sicily and Spain in the fifteenth century, practically no such question was brought forward before. In the Subcontinent, it was the capture of Delhi in 1803 by the British that fuelled the debate. The son of Shah

Valiullah, Shah Abdulaziz (1746–1824) claimed that, hence, India under British possession was *daru'l-harb* (See his *Fatawa-yi Azizi*, Delhi, 1906, pp. 16–17). But with regard to the ramifications of his ruling, Shah Abdulaziz did not imply openly the *Hijrat* and *jihad* for they were not possible at the time. But later resistance and *jihad* movements in India almost entirely depended on their attitude to this ruling and the debate continued time and again. See the various fatwas and opinions, M.N. Qureshi, *Pan-Islam in British Indian Politics*, pp. 176–80.

- 27 M.Y. Abbasi, *The Genesis of Muslim Fundamentalism in British India*, New Delhi: Indian Institute of Applied Political Research, 1987, p. 6; I.H. Qureshi, *Ulema in Politics*, Karachi, pp. 220–7, 375, 972; H. Malik, *Muslim Nationalism*, p. 192.
- 28 F.H. Skrine, *Life of Sir William Wilson Hunter*, London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1901, p. 199; W.W. Hunter, *The Indian Musalmans*, Calcutta: Trubner & Co., 1872, reprinted 1945.
- 29 *Ibid.*, pp. 117 and 123.
- 30 No. 317 of Letter Despatched October–December 1871, No. 41 of Mayo Papers; also Bundle Wahabis II No. 29 of Mayo Papers, India Office Records; P. Hardy, *The Muslims of British India*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972.
- 31 See, for example, S. S. Ahmad Khan, *Review on Dr. Hunter's Indian Musalmans*, Lahore, n.d., reprinted 1873.
- 32 Attending the meeting were influential Sunni *ulama* such as Moulvi Karamat Ali, Fazl Ali, Moulvi Abdul Hakim, Muhammed Abdur Rauf, Sheikh Ahmad Efendi Ansari. See *Abstract of Proceedings of the Mohamedan Literary Society of Calcutta*, Calcutta, 1871, pp. 1, 7 and 8.
- 33 Elliot to Clarendon, 9 October 1869, ED. Sec. H, 1869, nos. 110–12, National Archives of India.
- 34 See, for example, Lytton to Salisbury, 21 May 1877 and 23 June 1877, Lytton Papers, E.218/19, Vol. II, India Office Records.

6 An argumentative Indian

Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani, Islam, and nationalism in India

Barbara Metcalf

To call Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani, an Islamic scholar active in the Indian nationalist movement, an ‘argumentative Indian’ is to particularise a general category ‘*the argumentative Indian*’ recently articulated by the distinguished economist, Amartya Sen.¹ For Sen, being argumentative is an enduring characteristic of significant segments of the population of the Indian Sub-continent. In making this argument about history, Sen is seeking to intervene in India’s contemporary public life against those who favour homogeneity, ‘fundamentalism’ and uniformity in favour of those who embrace cultural pluralism, debate and engagement with competing perspectives. Sen – and it is hard not to think of him here as stereotypically Bengali – argues that Indians *like to talk*. Thus, in his view, the term is freed of any obvious negative valence – for example, that an argumentative person just likes ‘to pick a fight’ or is ‘cantankerous’. It becomes, instead, a sign of intellectual vitality and a characteristic to celebrate.

To assimilate Maulana Madani to this category, however, might seem somehow misplaced. For Sen, the ‘argumentative’ Indians are not merely those who engage in debate but precisely those who question what he calls ‘orthodoxy’. Thus, he seeks to bring to the fore the sceptics, rationalists and doubters throughout history – precisely those who challenge the guardians of the received tradition. These so-called ‘guardians’ are, above all, priestly Brahmins and the equally scholarly Islamic clerics, the *ulama*. Maulana Madani, a distinguished scholar of *hadith* and one of the leading mainstream Sunni *ulama* of the mid-twentieth century, was exactly the kind of person Amartya Sen, presumably, would put on that side of his fence.

For Sen, the opponents of those he profiles in his essay are of little interest and are presented as an undifferentiated ‘orthodoxy’. There is a long modernist tradition in the Indian Sub-continent, particularly significant among Muslims, that dismisses all who claim to speak on the basis of tradition as ‘fundamentalist’. The *mullah* becomes the opposite of the modern, who understands himself to be, in contrast, rational, tolerant, progressive and so forth. By assimilating Maulana Madani to Sen’s category of ‘argumentative’, I hope to show the artificiality of an undifferentiated view of the clerical class. To the extent that that class is represented as

rigid, narrow and intolerant, the actual voices of the *ulama* are simply not heard.

Maulana Madani's case is striking for a number of reasons. His religious and political thought demonstrates the profound strand of what might be called contextually based reasoning that can be seen as typical of the traditionalist *ulama* in contrast to the blind conservatism often attributed to them. Although it is widely assumed that the *ulama* read from a single script, their characteristic strategy in guiding behaviour towards Islamic norms is that of finding analogous patterns in sacred traditions. This, not surprisingly, allows for considerable variety and contradiction in their opinions. Maulana Madani represented the old cosmopolitanism of the Islamic elite; he was fluent in Arabic, long resident in the Hijaz, taught Muslims from far-flung places, yet remained rooted in his homeland of northern India. When he returned to India, his political position on political and economic issues led him to interact with the larger nationalist movement comprised of Muslims and non-Muslims both. Aside from his personal contacts, Urdu newspapers like the 'Madina' from Bijnore seem to have kept him abreast of political issues throughout India, in Britain and elsewhere.² Substantively, his experiences moved him specifically to lend Islamic legitimacy to a plural, secular, democratic vision of the new state, a position easily forgotten given the stereotypes about Muslim clerics that typically prevail.

Ironically, among those who opposed his embrace of cultural pluralism and democracy were some who might be seen as coming closer to Sen's vision of cosmopolitan, iconoclastic thinkers. These were men who were shaped by interaction with alternate cultures; they were dismissive of *mullahs* and *pirs*. They include: the poet and philosopher Muhammad Iqbal (1877–1938), with his celebration of Islamic ethics and rationality; the secular, British-trained lawyer, Muhammad Ali Jinnah (1876–1948); and the Islamist Maulana Maududi (1903–79), whose ideology, while obviously not secular, emerged as one of the transnational, totalising 'isms' of the 1920s and 1930s. It was these 'new' cosmopolitans, shaped substantially by dialogue with European thought, who, in the end, embraced religiously homogeneous societies. All three opposed the culturally plural, secular state Madani preferred. Maulana Madani was not only 'argumentative', but an 'argumentative *Indian*' – a modern nationalist identity that was at the core of his public life.

The inter-war period in India, as in much of the world, was a period of extraordinarily fertile social thought and experimentation. The dislocations and horrors of the First World War were a fillip to utopian dreams as well as to the harsh authoritarian realities of fascism and communism worldwide, as is well known. For India, which had been thrust into the war by colonialist decision and had paid heavy costs in economic and human terms, the renegeing, as it was seen, on wartime promises of progressive decolonisation was a bitter blow. The 1920s ushered in a new stage of

nationalist opposition to British rule and new techniques of protest, and it also gave rise to multiple visions of what an independent nation might look like. The range of programmes among Muslims was perhaps surprisingly varied, and Maulana Madani questioned, challenged and participated in many.

His entry into political life entailed, so to speak, real trial by fire. He was picked up in what could be called a dragnet in the context of colonialist anxieties about Islam during the First World War, interrogated in a tribunal without ever being told the charges against him and held in custody in a detention camp on the island of Malta for over three years. His family was left bereft and suffered greatly during the war.³ His release in 1920 coincided with the beginning of mass politics in colonial India. He plunged into the Gandhian movement, wound up back in jail in the course of the first non-cooperation movement, and remained a loyal khadi-wearing Congressman till Partition while simultaneously serving as principal of the Daru'l 'Ulum at Deoband, one of the major Islamic seminaries in India (from 1927 until his death in 1957).⁴ In the course of these decades, he debated ceaselessly, against British policies, with others of the Islamic scholarly community and with the emerging 'new Islamic intellectuals' who claimed to speak for Islam without the tradition of the historic legal texts and commentaries that shaped the opinions of the *ulama*.

The argument with the British: the Khilafat as a common nationalist cause

The fundamental argument of the nationalist movement was, of course, with the British. The move toward Muslim mass mobilisation in the nationalist cause came by what may seem an indirect route: the defence of the Ottoman Caliphate in the years after the First World War when the European victors moved to reduce the empire to a national Turkish core.⁵ The importance of these events was evident in a range of Muslim movements at the time, and it has continued significant to the present. Indeed, it was the dismemberment of the empire that Osama bin Laden invoked in his post-9/11 statement justifying terrorism, on the grounds that 'Our nation has been tasting this humiliation and contempt for more than 80 years.'⁶

In India, the issue of preserving the Islamic caliphate became a key symbol of anti-colonial protest as Muslims of varied backgrounds, both Western-educated and clerical, joined in a movement of support. This idea of the caliph, one must underline, made no territorial claims beyond the Ottoman lands, nor did it entail any role in legitimating, even theoretically, rulers in a country such as India. Even so, at first blush, the focus of this movement seems bizarre, some kind of medieval throwback, some denial of the reality of an era of modern nationalism. Why would Indian nationalists defend the integrity of the Ottoman sultan, giving him a status as 'caliph' with some kind of vague spiritual authority over Muslims, instead of

supporting, for example, Arab nationalism? Why did Muslim Indians care? An answer serves to illustrate how facile it is to attribute Muslim political behaviour to some undifferentiated, essentialised 'Islam' rather than see Muslims grappling with political realities on the ground.

For Maulana Madani, this post-war position was rooted in his experiences in the Hijaz where he observed the manoeuvrings of the British in attempting, under the guise of 'Arab nationalism', to wrest control from the Ottomans in favour of their own protégé, the Sharif, who would, they claimed, now be the 'caliph'. This is the story of the film *Lawrence of Arabia*. To secure their support, the British presumed to tell Muslims that they had got Islam wrong: the caliph had to be of proper Arab lineage, of the Prophet's own family, and could not be, as was the Ottoman, of course, a Turk. In Kitchener's words, with the Sharif in place, the caliph would be, as he should be, 'an Arab of true race'.⁷ No one seemed convinced. In the Hijaz, the declaration of war brought out huge public meetings to urge participation on the Turkish, not the British, side. Nonetheless, the Sharif increasingly saw his interests served by siding with the British and, by the summer of 1916, with British support, he had gone into open revolt.

Maulana Madani and others of the Indian scholarly leadership resident or traveling in the Hijaz were far more sympathetic to the Young Turks – modernising, Western-style leaders that they were – than to an aristocratic sycophant. The so-called 'traditional' leadership of the Sharif they viewed with contempt. When interrogated by the British after his arrest and deportation to Cairo in 1916, Maulana Madani readily acknowledged his opposition to their ally. 'The Sherif beats and imprisons without inquiry. Children have been slain and women outraged under his rule.' His position in short had to do with what he perceived as failures of justice and good governance on the part of the British protégé.⁸ And, of course, it had to do with the bad governance of the British themselves which lay behind it.

When, moreover, at the conclusion of the war, the British moved – contrary to the promises made to Muslim Indians to gain their participation in the war – to reduce the Ottoman Empire to its Turkish core, this was taken as further evidence of British perfidy. Thus, much as the British wanted to interpret Muslim defence of the caliphate as anti-Christian and medieval, opposition was, in fact, rooted in contemporaneous geo-political realities. Muslims were motivated, to be sure, by common bonds with fellow Muslims and concerns to keep their holy places in Muslim hands – but they were radicalised by anti-imperialism and specific political abuses. Moreover, as the documents of the movement make clear, it was the framework of British rule, where 'religion' was regarded as a domain of freedom for colonised subjects that increasingly encouraged Muslims to insist ever more that theirs was a 'religious' and not a 'political' cause.⁹ 'Religion', unlike politics, was defined as an arena of appropriate native concern.¹⁰

Maulana Madani himself deployed the rhetoric of the colonial state in 1921 in his trial for conspiracy as part of 'the Karachi Six' at the height of

Gandhi's first movement of civil disobedience. Indeed, the transcript of the testimony shows him asserting as the foundation of his defence the Queen's Proclamation of 1858, guaranteeing non-interference in the religious lives of her subjects. Whatever he did, Madani insisted, *was* religion. The moment is an important one to show that even if the stimulus to support of the Khilafat was grounded in anti-imperialism, participants soon deployed an argument from 'religion' to push their ideas. Maulana Madani, with considerable virtuosity, in this case showed himself able to participate in the coloniser's own discourse of 'religion', 'tolerance' and 'non-interference', critical themes in the legitimating language of the colonialism of the day, here adopted to undo colonialism's power. This is not simply a 'traditional' or uncritical religious response.

The campaign in support of the Caliphate proved to be short-lived as Turks themselves abolished the title in 1924. But the campaign itself was of great importance within India. Far from being motivated by some kind of religious frenzy, it was rooted in the same kind of critique of colonialist meddling and betrayal that fuelled the Indian nationalist movement as a whole. Clerical leaders of the Khilafat movement, like Maulana Madani, on this basis, were able to ally though their organisation, the Jami'at Ulama-i Hind, with Gandhi himself and others leaders of the Indian Nationalist Congress in a common cause. The Khilafat served to crystallise anti-imperial sentiment, and it provided the ground for someone like Madani for learning effective techniques of organisation and new styles of argumentation that contributed to long-term nationalist mobilisation.

Maulana Madani's use of the colonisers' legitimising rhetoric of freedom of religion was strategic, but its underlying philosophy was not – or soon ceased to be – simply expedient. Maulana Madani, in part through his contestations in public life, made his own a view of the role of the state as a neutral protector enabling religious communities of all varieties to flourish, ideally none persecuted and none privileged. His leadership did not go unchallenged, nor was his stance – on the ideal nature of the state or anything else – universally regarded as 'orthodox'. At one point, opposition to actions of his organisation, the Jami'at Ulama-i Hind, were described by the government informer as coming from 'the Ahl-i-Hadis [a different Sunni denomination from his] and other *orthodox* [emphasis added] Muhammadan parties.'¹¹

Indeed, Maulana Madani's greatest debates in the course of the nationalist movement were with other Muslims as competing visions of India's future took shape. The variety of visions was extraordinary in the inter-war period, even among supporters of the Indian National Congress, to say nothing of those in the incipient Hindu right or, among Muslims, such outliers as the khaki-dressed Khaksar. The Khaksar deserve mention simply to indicate the multiplicity of socio-political experiments of the day. The Khaksar were notorious for their economic levelling notions, symbolised not only by dress but their omnipresent shovels. The little-known

movement of the inter-war period, based mostly in the Punjab, favoured not only radical social policies but also a kind of universalising Islam embracing all religions, coupled with an admiration for fascist-style authoritarian leadership. In his rejection of the Khaksar, Maulana Madani was at one with a broad spectrum of opinion that found the movement extreme in every regard.

In one way, however, that movement was significant in its leadership: the twentieth century would increasingly see spokesmen for Islam arise who had none of the historic claims to religious authority, whether in terms of the inherited charisma of the Sufis or the classical education of the Islamic scholars, the *ulama*. Inayatu'llah Mashriqi (1888–1963), founder of the Khaksar movement, for example, held credentials in science and engineering from Cambridge University, not from an Islamic seminary, and, indeed, claimed his authority in part from his apparent brilliance in modern science and engineering. He held the traditionally educated *ulama* in contempt, and they, for the most part, reciprocated in kind.¹²

The two most powerful movements to emerge as challenges to Maulana Madani were, similarly, both based for the most part outside the ranks of the traditionally educated Islamic leadership. These movements were the separatist movement for Pakistan and the Islamist movement of Maulana Maududi. In regard to both, Maulana Madani did indeed 'argue' – speeches, pamphlets, letters to the editor and correspondence with inquiring individuals.

Iqbal, the modernists and the demand for Pakistan

Maulana Madani's most famous debate was with the celebrated poet Iqbal in the late 1930s. The two engaged in polemical exchanges over several rounds in North Indian Urdu-language newspapers. Maulana Madani's position throughout was to insist on the Islamic legitimacy of embracing a culturally plural, secular democracy as the best and the only realistic future for India's Muslims. The cleric sided with the Indian Nationalist Congress. The Cambridge- and Munich-educated lawyer insisted on a religiously defined, homogeneous Muslim society.

The public debate between Maulana Madani and Iqbal took place in the changed context of electoral politics in the mid-1930s with the enlarged electorates and substantial extension of provincial autonomy granted by the 1935 Government of India Act. In 1937 the Indian National Congress won stunning victories, establishing ministries in seven provinces, including the United Provinces. There, however, the Muslim League had won twenty-nine of the sixty-six reserved seats for Muslims, and the Indian National Congress had won none.¹³ The decision not to include the League in a coalition in the United Provinces provincial government, and a range of other perceived slights and policies, definitively alienated many of the Muslim leadership, including both Muhammad Ali Jinnah, newly returned

from England as leader of the Muslim League, along with the 'Islamist' Abu'l A'la Maududi, from Indian National Congress support.

Maulana Madani's case was different. Perhaps surprisingly, he had supported Jinnah's Muslim League in the 1937 elections in the United Provinces, as had others of the Jami'at Ulama-i-Hind. The League had stood on a platform similar to that of the Indian National Congress, committed to democratic self-government and a range of meliorist social programs. Both asserted a commitment to ensuring the interests of minorities. This was a time when the vision of independence was still very fluid, and the Indian National Congress and the League might well have found ways to cooperate. The Muslim League and the Indian National Congress together in the United Provinces in 1937 primarily fought the landlord party, the National Agriculturalist Party, widely regarded as lackeys of the British. Jinnah had apparently, moreover, made a commitment to shift the direction of the League away from its own core support of aristocratic and – to Maulana Madani's eye – pro-British members in favour of anti-British nationalists, including *ulama* like Maulana Madani himself.¹⁴ But Maulana Madani rapidly grew disillusioned as Jinnah continued to support princes and big landlords, and made no effort to consult with the *ulama*. Madani saw Jinnah's actions as betrayal.¹⁵

Meanwhile, instead of the Muslim League and the Indian National Congress coming closer, they increasingly diverged. Not only did the claim of the League to be the only spokesman for Muslims intensify, but it also increasingly articulated demands for Muslim geographic autonomy. Maulana Madani, in contrast, ever more clearly formulated his arguments for Muslim and non-Muslim politicians to work together under the aegis of the Indian National Congress. Madani was absolutely clear that his vision of a religiously plural society not only strategically best served Muslim interests but that it also had clear *qur'anic* sanction.

In December 1937, at a political meeting in Delhi, Maulana Madani had made a straightforward statement, 'In the current age, nations (*qaumeen*) are based on territory (*autaan*), not religion (*mazhab*).'¹⁶ What made this point obvious to him was that in his own experience people abroad made no distinction of whether a person was 'Muslim, Hindu, Sikh or Parsi' – all were viewed as 'Hindustani'. By the next morning, Urdu newspapers in the capitol had reported that Maulana Madani had said *milla* (a term commonly linked to religious community) was defined by territory, implying that domicile in 'India' defined religion. This report was the stimulus to the debate with Iqbal, now a supporter of Jinnah and the Muslim League.

Iqbal, whether innocently or expediently, accepted this newspaper report as fact and replied with a scandalous versified slander that suggested, quite simply, that Maulana Madani, who held the highest training in the classical Arabic disciplines, was principal of the most respected seminary in India, and a scholar with fluent spoken Arabic, did not know Arabic, 'singing' out heresy from a 'pulpit' – while, in fact, to add insult to injury, he had been

speaking at a political gathering in the city. The debate, conducted in the Urdu press and culminating in Maulana Madani's most important political tract is riveting, for the protagonists' arguments reveal remarkably different intellectual work.

Iqbal was a modernist who argued in favour of going directly to sacred scripture, unhampered by centuries of scholarship. He had two grounds on this occasion by which he justified this approach. The first, rather playful, was to cloak his modernism in the charisma of the holy man, deploying verses to present himself as nothing less than the wandering holy man, the *qalandar*, who, he wrote, knows only two words of Arabic – but those are *la ilaha*, 'no other gods'. So he implied that he had attained absolute knowledge of the One, without the years of study of the scholars or the arduous journey on a spiritual path of the mainstream Sufis. Scholars like Madani, he implied, may have a vast Arabic vocabulary but they really know nothing. Second, Iqbal claimed authority as a modern, educated man. The rational, ethical system of Islam, he insisted, was to be understood precisely by individuals like himself, without 'priesthood and hereditary kingship', people shaped by 'reason and experience' and familiar with 'Nature and History as sources of human knowledge' – as presumably Madani was not.¹⁷ The modernists denied authority to those who historically had held it, whom they now dismissed as old-fashioned scholars who knew only the letter of the law and only the confines of the academy. The modernist to be modern had to have, of course, a 'tradition' to reject, and this was it. Iqbal, the 'new Islamic intellectual', if you will, the 'lay' intellectual of the twentieth century, threw out the gauntlet that marked the separate worlds of the traditionalist and the modern interpretation of the faith.

But, claims to authority aside, what substantively did they really differ on? Iqbal, embraced today as 'the Poet of Pakistan', in fact challenged the most fundamental premise of modern political life: the nation-state. Iqbal is often assumed to be a supporter of religiously based nationalism. In fact, he rejected *all* nationalism, even as he came to favour political autonomy for religiously homogeneous populations. In poetry and prose, Iqbal had, for decades, in company with a minor strand of other Indian intellectuals as well as with European and non-European critics across the globe, denounced the 'black' side of modernity: competitive nationalism and its resultant militarism, imperialism and consumerism. As he said in his response to Madani, 'I have been repudiating the concept of Nationalism since the time when it was not [even] well-known in India and the Muslim world'.¹⁸ For him, the First World War had shown nationalism at its worst, not only in the destruction wrought in Europe but also in Britain's creating national boundaries among Arabs and Turks who should instead, he maintained, have built their communities out of their common moral bonds as Muslims. For Iqbal, even the League of Nations was flawed, predicated as it was on the very fact of nations. Islam stood to him as a moral language to counter the modern, territorially based nationalism modelled by Europe

that he believed was destructive of ideal human relationships as symbolised by Islam.¹⁹ Simple love of native land, he explained, was fine. It was when it became a 'political concept' or 'social order' that he objected in favour of his ideal of an order inspired by Islam.

Iqbal insisted that his was the correct reading of the Qur'an, and he cited chapter and verse to justify the centrality of the *milla* or *umma* of Islam. Iqbal dismissed the point made by Madani that a *qaum* could include believers and non-believers, in order to insist on the higher prophetic goal of creating the *umma* of believers that transcended the destructive divisions of nation and race. The Prophet himself was not an Arab nationalist, he argued, but a leader of co-religionists defined not by territory at all.²⁰ For Iqbal, Madani was a dupe to what Iqbal had called in one of his most famous poems the 'narcotics' of imperialism that stupify subject peoples into fighting over illusory power – and of these 'narcotics', 'nationalism' was high on his list.²¹ Iqbal, unrealistically, struggled to imagine a world in the twentieth century with no nationalism at all. In a place freed of colonialism and freed of nationalist and class divisions, the spirit of Islam, he believed, could allow a society of creative individuals to again flourish in a society that would serve Muslims and non-Muslims both.²² That the seed Iqbal watered would grow into the virulently nationalist state of Pakistan is surely one of the great ironies of twentieth-century history.

Just as Iqbal had argued that Maulana Madani was a colonialist dupe in his embrace of nationalism, Madani, in turn, insisted that it was Iqbal, not himself, who was entangled in exactly that trap. He too went back to what both saw as egregious, exploitative, imperialist dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire. There, he argued, the machinations of the colonial rulers had fostered divisions of race (*nasl*) and homeland (*watn*) in Ottoman lands. For Iqbal, only the encouragement of divisions between Muslims, namely the Arabs and Turks, was of concern. But Madani was equally outraged by the divisions along religious lines, the divisions he feared would happen again in India. Under the Ottomans, he argued, Christians and Muslims long coexisted, just as Hindus and Muslims had done in India, but European powers had sowed dissension and provided the support to break off areas like Greece and parts of the Balkans from the Ottoman core. Now the British were determined to weaken and emasculate countries under their direct control by sowing the same kind of divisions, this time division that would tear apart India. The British had praised what one might call sub-nationalisms raised against the Ottomans, so it was little surprising that now they deplored efforts to unify Hindus and Muslims in the nationalist movement in India. Madani gave no credence to their specious claims that they did so in order to ensure the safety of Muslims. To divide Hindus and Muslims, Madani asserted, was yet another colonial strategy to weaken subject peoples.

Maulana Madani, unlike Iqbal, never questioned the naturalness of the nation-state. His concern was to provide a text-based argument for the

legitimacy of creating a *qaum*, a nation, consisting of believers and non-believers who act together for a common purpose. To this end, he adduced a meticulous examination of texts, provided both in Arabic and in Urdu translation, scrutinised in the light of Arabic usage as known from grammars and dictionaries of the Prophet's own time, in order to defend an Indian nationalism. For Maulana Madani, 'composite' nationalism made up of Muslims and non-Muslims, working to secure common goals was, in a sense, already a fact given the arenas of life in which people of diverse religions in India already interacted. That pattern, moreover, had a sacred analogue in an episode in the life of the Prophet Muhammad, the Treaty of Hudaibiyah, when he allied with various non-Muslims, including Jews. In such a compact, Maulana Madani argued, a Muslim would side with the non-Muslims, even against a common Muslim foe. Maulana Madani's textual arguments were widely shared by others of the traditionalist Islamic leadership. The basic argument was spelled out, for example, in the widely reprinted presidential address to the annual meeting of the Jami'at Ulama-i-Hind delivered by Maulana Madani's Deobandi colleague, Maulana Anwar Shah Kashmiri (1875–1933), in 1927 at the height of communal rioting. Anwar Shah had similarly stressed the prophetic precedent of alliances with non-Muslims, the integrity of Muslims in keeping their pledges, and the long historical ties and love of country of the Muslims of India.²³ Maulana Madani, thanks to his encounter with Iqbal and his longevity, was central in making these arguments widely known.

But what would his nation-state look like? All nationalists in colonial India grappled with a balance between a nation fitting a liberal model of autonomous individuals and a nation where 'community' of various kinds was taken into account. In that balance, Madani imagined India as a congeries of communities relatively encapsulated in their individual languages, cultures, education, and moral/legal systems. The historian Peter Hardy has spoken of this vision as a kind of 'judicial' or we could even say 'cultural' 'apartheid'.²⁴ Thus, Muslims would be a 'community', guided by religious leadership, following distinctive educational, cultural and legal paths from other religiously defined communities who would do the same. What was left for common efforts, Madani argued, were effectively those now delegated to a range of public forums and assemblies. All that was needed at this point was an end to immoral, exploitative, arrogant, destructive British rule. Maulana Madani enlarged his argument about nationalism in a way that implied that it was Iqbal's superficial vision, not his, that fell short in serving Islam. Madani asserted access to what he called the essential or 'inner' (*m'anavi*) meaning of nationalism beyond what it might appear on the surface. That meaning was linked to the fundamental belief that Islam was intended for all humankind.²⁵ It was exactly in a free India that Islamic learning and cultural traditions, those that Madani represented, would be protected and where the message of Islam, whether accepted or not, would

be available to all. He had, in short, *not* placed nationalism above religion but seen that nationalism could serve religion, precisely in a context where individuals could lead an observant Islamic life.

Iqbal and Madani differed over nationalism; they differed over what they understood to be an 'Islamic life'. 'Islam', then, as now, meant different things to different people. Modernist to the core, Iqbal saw Islam as 'spirit', and essence, a source of philosophy and ethics. It was nothing less than the very source of modernity. This was a perspective meant to undo colonial claims of European cultural superiority. It was an issue of no interest whatsoever to Madani. Iqbal imagined a genealogy of rationalism that produced modern science, and in that genealogy Muslims had played a substantial role, not merely as transmitters of the classical heritage to Europe but as active participants and shapers of that heritage. Indeed, in one of the striking passages of the celebrated series of lectures he delivered in 1928, he had turned to the Prophet of Islam who, he maintained, 'in so far as the spirit of his revelation is concerned [...] *belongs to the modern world*. [...] The birth of Islam [...] is the birth of inductive intellect.'²⁶ In a place freed of colonialism and freed of nationalist and other divisions, 'Islam', in the sense of the moral and rational spirit of Islam, could allow a society of creative individuals to again flourish.

Iqbal had no interest in Madani's concern with disseminating fidelity to the ritual and social practices of Islamic tradition, the central effort of reformist *ulama* like Madani, let alone with Maududi's emerging ideologies of an 'Islamic state' and 'Islamic system.' As he explained, calling for autonomy for Muslim populations within India in his 1930 Presidential Address to the Muslim League:

Nor should the Hindus fear that the creation of autonomous Muslim states will mean the introduction of a kind of religious rule in such states. [...] It is a state conceived as a contractual organism long before Rousseau ever thought of such a thing [...] The character of a Muslim state can be judged from what the *Times of India* pointed out some time ago in a leader on the Indian Banking Enquiry Committee. 'In ancient India,' the paper points out, 'the state framed laws regulating the rates of interest, but in Muslim times, although Islam clearly forbids the realization of interest on money loaned, Indian Muslim states imposed no restriction on such notes.'²⁷

To reiterate then, Iqbal and Madani did not differ over the basis of nationalism, the one insisting on religion, the other on territory, as it might seem. The real point was that Iqbal, unrealistically, struggled to imagine a world in the twentieth century *with no nationalism at all*. He thought that Muslim political autonomy would foster a less divided and less exploitative society on the basis of an Islamic moral system that would in fact serve all people, Muslim or not.

The arguments between Madani and Iqbal tell a great deal about each of them: their understanding of Islam, who should speak for Islam and the kind of political vision each espoused – utopian in Iqbal's case; realist, I suggest, in Madani's. Each vision was to some extent shaped by having spent formative years in different parts of India: Iqbal in a Muslim majority area, the Punjab; and Maulana Madani, in the eastern United Provinces in a largely Hindu population. Both shared a passionate commitment to India's freedom. Both shared a fervent belief that their approach best served Islam.

Arguably, neither has been well served by history. Iqbal has been reduced to being 'the poet of Pakistan' when he in fact was not unlike the celebrated Bengali poet and thinker Tagore (1861–1941) – one of Amartya Sen's heroes, one might add – who also anguished over the destructiveness of competitive modern nationalism and capitalism. Tagore and Iqbal, alike, countered nationalism with such constructs as 'Asia', the 'East', and, for Iqbal, 'Islam'. Maulana Madani, dismissed as a traditional *mullah*, was a staunch supporter of democracy and pluralism whose opposition to the British was based not on 'fanaticism' but on opposition to injustice and exploitation. He was, moreover, as opposed to the ideas of an Islamic state as he was to a modernist state simply comprised of Muslims, the vision ultimately endorsed by Iqbal.

Rejecting the 'Islamic system' of Abu'l 'Ala Maududi

Although of much less significance at the time, yet another challenge to Madani's stance also emerged at the end of colonial rule, namely an 'Islamist' position led by Maulana Maududi and his party, Jama'at-i Islami, founded in 1941.²⁸ Maududi opposed both the scheme of Partition, which basically provided two secular states, and the Indian National Congress goal of a united India. He held out a vision of what can be called 'Islamist rule'. Islamist orientations worldwide have also included the Muslim Brotherhood, which originated in Egypt in the same period; the later ideologists of the Iranian Islamic revolution; and, in the late twentieth century, several of the Afghan jihad movements in opposition first to the Soviets and then to the Taliban. The Islamist movements are ones typically led by secularly educated professionals and technical people committed to an 'Islamic system', as they call it, parallel to other systems of the twentieth century like Marxism and capitalism, that shapes all aspects of life: thus, 'Islamic economics', 'Islamic society', 'Islamic governance', 'Islamic sciences' and so forth. The Islamist movements in principle, moreover, if not in practice, are *not* nationalist.²⁹

In 1939, one of Maulana Madani's wavering followers sought his guidance after reading a persuasive essay by Maududi. Madani replied with a ringing refutation.³⁰ The heart of Madani's argument is that theory gets you nowhere. '*Siyaasiyyaat*' (politics) is not resolved, he says, 'through *fal-*

safyyaat (philosophy). If people fail to pay attention to history and to contemporary constraints, if they hide their eyes from the conditions around them, they are self-destructive, or, as he says, they might as well commit suicide. For Madani, the reality of the day was the constitutional movement, the need to gain the support of the population as a whole and a united front against the British. In relation to this last, Maududi's effort to add the creation of 'an Islamic order' to the conflicting movements already in place could not be more inappropriate.

Maududi's essay had specifically denounced the Muslims who supported the Indian National Congress on the grounds that a Muslim could not accept the leadership of a non-Muslim. This, for Madani, was the proof that Maududi lived in a dream world, abstracted from the reality in which the Muslim population of India actually lived. He made the point with aplomb. Just think, he wrote, what Maududi's argument would mean. Every Muslim participating in a municipal board, or a district board, or an assembly, or a council, or a trade or industrial administrative board – all of them – would have to resign, since, given the relative size of the Hindu and Muslim populations in India, they were probably following orders of non-Muslims! Then, of course, with no income, they would fall into poverty and famine, and descend – and along with them their whole family, their children, ultimately the whole Muslim people, – down the steps to the river (*ghats*) of *fana*. Madani inverted the meaning of *fana*, or obliteration, the final stage of the Sufi, from ascent to descent, from a positive to a negative value. Muslims with Maududi's vision would also have to live without treatment by non-Muslim doctors, the work of non-Muslim engineers, the buildings of non-Muslim architects, the administrative work of non-Muslim bureaucrats, and on and on.

Second, Madani wrote, given that among Muslims themselves there was hardly consensus on religious grounds, just *what* would Islamic rule mean? He then listed examples to call attention to those differences: 'Easternism', 'Westernism', 'Shi'ism', 'Qadianiyat', (an outsider's term for a late nineteenth-century orientation following Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian [1835–1908]), 'Khaksaariat' (a label to suggest that Mashriqi's followers were a denomination), 'Adam-taqlid' ('non-conformists' who directly consulted Qur'an and *Hadith* instead of the traditional historical scholarship; the *Ahl-i Hadith*, mentioned above). 'Each person', Madani pointed out, 'considers *his* reasoning beyond that of Plato or Socrates.'³¹ And – showing again how he had imbibed the new political world of his day – he added the reminder that in a free country the only sources of authority are persuasion, guidance and advice. All this suggests that Madani's opposition to Islamist politics did not only derive from India not being a majority Muslim country. Even among Muslims there could be no agreement on the nature of proper Islamic rule.

The official Indian National Congress position and the official Jami'at position were, in this period, congruent. But behind the Jami'at positions

were arguments, disseminated not only by individual letters but also by publications, by periodical publications, and by public meetings, that insisted on an Islamic justification for their stance. In this letter on Maududi, for example, Madani, in the characteristic discursive style of the *ulama*, made an analogy between competing political visions and requirements for the canonical prayer. Rules for the latter are subject to individual characteristics and contexts, for example, whether a person is sick or well, travelling or staying in one place. Imagine right now, he argued, how the context of India must impact the choice of political strategy. What dream world was Maududi living in, he implied, to think that in the mixed population of India, with the varieties of Islamic interpretations current, he could enforce the rules he drew from theoretical premises like stoning, prohibition or monetary compensation for murder? Rules like these, Madani concluded, could not possibly be morally obligatory: they were simply not an obligation (*farz*) in India as it was.³²

What kind of an ‘argumentative Indian’ was he?

If one were to judge the quality of Madani’s argumentativeness in terms of results, he was someone whose arguments prevailed. Indeed, he may well have made the most influential and significant intervention in religious thought of any Islamic scholar of twentieth-century India. The importance of his role rests in the fact that he laid out in uncompromising terms the Islamic sanction for Muslims to work and live with non-Muslims in a shared polity, and, specifically, to embrace the secular democracy of a state like India. Maulana Madani was a hard-headed pragmatist. He recognised that nationalism, democracy and the importance of public opinion were the political currency of the day. He welcomed that form of a government as a context in which *ulama* like himself could guide Muslims in all those practices of faith and work that made up the texture of an observant religious life. His was not the ‘spirit’ of philosophical, ethical Islam of Iqbal, but the concrete Islam of individual ritual and behavioural guidance. He shared the pattern of ‘traditionalist’ Islamic leaders elsewhere as well who welcome a secular state that gives them scope to further that guidance.

Madani could not imagine severing his ties with the plural society he lived in and the land where his ancestors were buried. He could not imagine a state led by irreligious people like Jinnah or one led by ideologues like Maududi, who seemed oblivious of the astonishing diversity of Muslim sectarian orientations and of a political culture predicated on persuasion, not force. In India today, there is no Islamist party, no national Muslim party at all, no evidence of participation on the part of Indians in any militant jihad. There certainly are modernists in India, but Maulana Madani’s traditionalist focus on individual ritual behaviour is far more characteristic of Muslim Indian religious orientations today. Indians, one

might add, form a significant component of the world's Muslim population. Even after Partition reduced India's Muslim population by approximately two-thirds, India had the world's second- or third-largest Muslim population. Their political behaviour is, therefore, numerically significant among Muslims worldwide.

Maulana Madani got to his position on state and society, to return to Amartya Sen's colourful and evocative category, as an 'argumentative Indian'. He operated largely in what could be called a Muslim public sphere, carried out for the most part in the Urdu language. He worked with non-Muslims, but his public life was largely conducted among other Muslims. Yet, even though he operated in Urdu, he was part of a larger world in which he knew the rhetoric and discourse of the colonial state and he knew nationalist arguments from across India. It was that engagement that decisively shaped his socio-political ideas more than his engagement with his fellow Muslims.

As a believer in secular, plural democracy, he imagined the new nation as one that would be made up of religious communities as the fundamental building blocks of society, with education and justice largely internal to each. Such a view challenges other models of the liberal state that favour a more active state and more independent individuals, but it was a view held by many in his day across religious traditions. Neither Iqbal, nor Maududi, nor Madani were the secular iconoclasts that Sen celebrates. All of them justified their positions in the name of Islam, albeit in fundamentally different ways. Maulana Madani, grounded in the historic textual tradition and most easily labelled as 'orthodox', no less than the others, imagined a world beyond sectarian conflict, beyond arrogant imperialism and beyond destructive, competitive nationalism. Whether Maulana Madani was as he believed the most realistic of the three or not, his argument in favour of pluralism and a secular state had enduring salience to the lived experience of millions of Muslims in independent India in the following decades. In contrast, ideas of an Islamically shaped moral society without nationalism, or an Islamist state, remained only visions.

Acknowledgement

An earlier version of this article was published as 'Observant Muslims, Secular Indians: The Political Vision of Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani, 1938–57' in R.M. Chakrabarty and A. Sartori (eds), *From the Colonial to the Postcolonial: India and Pakistan in Transition*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2007.

I thank Rochana Mazumdar for inviting me to the University of Chicago and for including me in the volume. I also thank Tithi Bhattacharya for an invitation to Purdue, where I tried out the idea of Husain Ahmad as 'argumentative'. I am grateful to participants for their responses on both of these occasions, especially Muzaffar Alam, who briefly overlapped at Deoband with Maulana Madani, at Chicago, and Sumit Sarkar, who probed the meaning of 'argumentative' with me, at Purdue.

Notes

- 1 Amartya Sen, *The Argumentative Indian: Writings on Indian Culture, History and Identity* (London: Penguin, 2005).
- 2 H.M. Madani, *Naqsh-i hayat*, Deoband: Maktaba diniya, 1953.
- 3 H.A. Madani, *Asir-i Malta*, Deoband: Rashid Company, n.d.
- 4 For the early history of this institution, see B. Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband 1860–1900*, 2nd edn, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- 5 G. Minault, *The Khilafat Movement: Religious Symbolism and Political Mobilization in India*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1982.
- 6 BBC News, 'Bin Laden's Warning: Full Text'. Message first broadcast on Arabic station, Al Jazeera, 7 October 2001, Available: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/1585636.stm (accessed 1 April 2007); E.S Ho, 'Empire through Diasporic Eyes: A View from the Other Boat', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, April 2004, Vol. 46, No. 2, pp. 210–46.
- 7 D. Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East*, New York: Avon Books, 1990.
- 8 PRO/TNA: FO 686/149/f. 202–8. Foreign Office. Jeddah Agency. Papers. Silk Letter Case, 1916–1917.
- 9 See the official reports on provincial Khilafat activities in M. Hasan and M. Pernau (eds), *Regionalising Pan-Islamism: Documents of the Khilafat Movement*, New Delhi: Manohar, 2005.
- 10 S. Freitag, *Collective Action and Community: Public Arenas and the Emergence of Communalism in North India*, Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1989.
- 11 Hasan and Pernau, *Regionalising Pan-Islamism*, p. 21.
- 12 M.A. Malik, *Allama Inayatullah Mashraqi: A Political Biography*, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- 13 P. Hardy, *The Muslims of British India*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972, p. 224.
- 14 C. Khaliqzaman, *Pathway to Pakistan*, Lahore: Longmans, 1961.
- 15 H.A. Madani, *Maktubat-i shaihu'l-islam*, ed. by Maulana Najmu'd-din Islahi, Deoband: Maktaba diniya, 1950/1, Vol. I, p. 384.
- 16 H.A. Madani, *Mutahida Qaumiyyat aur Islam*, New Delhi: Al Jamia Book Depot, 1972, pp. 7–8.
- 17 M. Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, 1928; Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1978, p. 126.
- 18 Muhammad Iqbal, *Speeches and Statements of Iqbal*, ed. by A.P. Tariq, Lahore: Sh. Ghulam Ali and Son, 1973, p. 230.
- 19 Ibid., pp. 234–5.
- 20 Ibid., pp. 242–3.
- 21 M. Iqbal, 'Iqbal: A Selection of the Urdu Verse', trans. David Mathews, London: University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies, 1993, pp. 104–5.
- 22 B. Metcalf, 'Iqbal's Imagined Geographies: The East, The West, the Nation, and Islam', in K. Hansen and D. Lelyveld (eds), *A Wilderness of Possibilities: Urdu Studies in Transnational Perspective*, New York: Columbia University Press and New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- 23 Anwar Shah Kashmiri, Maulana, 'Building Bridges of Harmony: A Speech by Maulana Anwar Shah Kashmiri', trans. Yoginder Sikand, at <http://www.islaminterfaith.org/jan2005/article4.htm>, 2005 (accessed 7 May 2002); Madani, *Maktubat*, pp. 402–3.
- 24 P. Hardy, *Partners in Freedom and True Muslims: The Political Thought of Some Muslim Scholars in British India, 1912–47*, Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1971.

- 25 H.A. Madani, *Muttahida Qaumiyyat aur Islam*, Delhi: Aljami'at Buk Dipo, 1938, p. 22.
- 26 Muhammad Iqbal, *Speeches and Statements of Iqbal*, p. 126.
- 27 Muhammad Iqbal, 'Presidential Address Delivered at the Annual Session of the All-India Muslim League at Allahabad. 29 December 1930', *Speeches and Statements of Iqbal*, ed. by A.P. Tariq, Lahore: Sh. Ghulam Ali and Son, 1973, pp. 14–15.
- 28 C. Adams, 'The Ideology of Maulana Maududi', in D. Smith (ed.), *South Asian Politics and Religion*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1966, pp. 371–97.
- 29 Maududi, it is worth noting, in his own career represented the variety and probing and continuous rethinking characteristic of so many individuals and movements in the inter-war years. His father had a Western-style education and a law degree, but he was ambivalent about that education, devoted to Sufism, and educated his son at home. In the years after the First World War, Maududi was an enthusiastic supporter of the Indian National Congress, turned to journalism and embraced fully the Khilafat movement. In 1921, he was invited to edit the official newspaper of the Jami'at Ulama-i-Hind newspaper. By this time he had learned English and was increasingly interested in Western learning, but he also studied traditional Islamic texts in Delhi at the same time. The collapse of the Khilafat movement, and the communal violence of the 1920s, left him, like so many others, adrift, and in his case led him too to question the morality of nationalism. Maududi's focus turned to revival among Muslims and a vision of a model Islamic community. See Adams, 'The Ideology of Maulana Maududi'.
- 30 Madani, *Maktubat*, Vol. I, pp. 395–401.
- 31 Ibid., Vol. I, p. 399.
- 32 Ibid., Vol. I, p. 400.

7 Grateful to the Dutch Government

Sayyid ‘Uthmân and Sarekat Islam in 1913

Nico J.G. Kaptein

Introduction

This paper will deal with the question of how the well-known scholar of Arab descent, Sayyid ‘Uthmân ibn ‘Abd Allâh ibn ‘Aqîl ibn Yahyâ al-‘Alawî of Batavia (1822–1914) justified the rule of the colonial administration in the Netherlands East Indies. Among his many writings,¹ I have found a number that demonstrate his approval of the infidel Dutch rule. For the present book I have chosen to concentrate on his writings dealing with Sarekat Islam, the first Indonesian mass organisation, which was founded at the end of Sayyid ‘Uthmân’s life. In these writings, he gives his opinion of this organisation and sets out how it should behave towards the Government. Before I discuss these writings, it would be useful to present some relevant background information about Dutch policies towards Islam at this particular period, about the life of Sayyid ‘Uthmân, and about the rise of Sarekat Islam.

At the end of the nineteenth century, government policy in the Netherlands East Indies with regard to Islam was – completely in harmony with the liberal tradition of the motherland – the adoption of a neutral position towards religion. The great mastermind behind this policy was Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje (1857–1936), the famous adviser on native affairs, who worked in the Indies from 1889 to 1906. Snouck, as he is often called, had divided Islam conceptually into two parts: the purely religious and the political. In religious matters, he believed, the Government should keep itself aloof. This implied, for instance, that the rules and regulations governing the pilgrimage to Mecca were considerably liberalised under the influence of Snouck, who had categorised the pilgrimage as a religious phenomenon. Prior to Snouck’s influence on the Islam policy, any returning pilgrim was looked upon as a potential revolutionary, but Snouck made clear that these *hajis* did not necessarily pose a threat to the state and that repressive measures with regard to the pilgrimage to Mecca would only result in hostility and militancy. In a nutshell, Snouck thought that in religious matters the Muslims of the Netherlands East Indies should be left completely unhindered to pursue their religious obligations. However, he

took a different position as soon as Muslims began to engage in politics. In this domain, Snouck thought that the Government should act resolutely to quash any political aspirations of Islam, if necessary even by military means, as indeed happened in the case of the Muslim-inspired uprisings in Aceh. These ideas formed part of a new era in Dutch colonial policy which was directed towards replacing the past colonial exploitation of the native population by a concern for the well-being of the people. This policy, which became known as the 'Ethical Policy', was officially inaugurated by Queen Wilhelmina's speech from the throne for the year 1901 and was based on the idea that the Netherlands had a moral responsibility towards the indigenous population.²

Sayyid 'Uthmân was one of the most prominent *ulamas* of his era in the Netherlands East Indies, but is known first and foremost for his activities in the colonial administration from 1889 until his death in 1914 (from 1891 in the capacity of 'Honorary Advisor for Arab Affairs'). About his formative years, there is only one source available: a Malay poem composed shortly after his death by his grandson,³ which is entitled *Qamar al-Zamân menyatakan keadaannya al-marhûm al-Habîb 'Uthmân dan ta'rikhnya*. According to this source, Sayyid 'Uthmân was born in Pekojan, Batavia, in 1822. He was raised by his maternal grandfather, 'Abd al-Rahmân al-Misrî, with whom he also commenced his religious studies. In 1841, when he was nineteen years old, he went to Mecca to pursue his studies in greater depth. This he did under the supervision of, amongst others, Sayyid Ahmad Zaynî Dahlân, the great Shafi'ite *mufti* of the time. Sayyid 'Uthmân spent the years 1847–55 in the Hadramaut, the land of his forefathers in the southern part of the Arabian Peninsula. Then, after a trip through the Middle East, he returned to the Hadramaut, where he spent another period of seven years. Finally, in 1862, he settled permanently in Batavia, where he started a career as a teacher of religion.⁴ In the 1880s, Sayyid 'Uthmân began to win respect in circles of the colonial administration for a variety of reasons, and, eventually, in 1889, this resulted in his formal involvement in the running of Islamic affairs, for which he received a government allowance of 100 Dutch florins a month.⁵

Towards the end of his life, Sayyid 'Uthmân dealt extensively with Sarekat Islam. This first indigenous mass organisation in the Netherlands East Indies was founded in Surakarta in early 1912, building on some small local initiatives to provide mutual assistance against criminals. In the first half of 1913, Sarekat Islam met with great enthusiasm among the population of Java and, consequently, experienced an explosive growth manifest in the mushrooming of new branches all over Java and beyond. Interestingly, in its initial phase, Sarekat Islam showed the Government great respect. The latter was seen as a partner, striving for the same goal as the masses, namely the emancipation of the indigenous population from their humble social position or, in one word, 'progress' (*kemajuan*). Although its stated aim was unequivocal, there were great differences between the various branches of Sarekat Islam, some paying more attention to mutual solidarity

among the members, while others preferred to underline the element of *dakwah* (the propagation of a pure form of Islam) in the organisation. An example of the latter type was the Batavia branch which must have shaped Sayyid 'Uthmân's view of the nascent organisation. Thanks to the activities of the Batavia branch of Sarekat Islam and its leader, Goenawan, attendance at the Friday prayer had increased more than tenfold.⁶

An important aspect in the formative period of the movement was its attempt to obtain legal recognition from the Government. This was necessary to function properly, since without this recognition gatherings of the movement could be dissolved at any time. The request for this recognition by the leaders of Sarekat Islam was heavily debated in government circles and among the European public in general, for instance in their newspapers. Many people feared the imminent emancipation of the masses, which seemed to be about to threaten their privileged positions, and therefore demanded an immediate and complete prohibition of the movement, sometimes even by asking the use of brute force. However, the Governor-General, A.W.F. Idenburg (1861–1935) did not bow to this enormous pressure. He consulted many people and also received the Board of Sarekat Islam on 29 March,⁷ before he put forward a kind of compromise on 30 June 1913: Idenburg gave recognition to the local, individual branches of Sarekat Islam, but disallowed the formation of one unified Sarekat Islam at a national level.

Idenburg's motives for doing so, despite the prevailing huge opposition, were partly pragmatic and partly in line with the principles of the ethical policy. He considered Sarekat Islam to be part of the 'Asian Awakening' and a manifestation of the new spirit of self-awareness of the native population which was there to stay. Although he sensed that the leadership of Sarekat Islam was weak and its goals vague, he was convinced that the movement was not anti-Dutch, and his intention was to preserve this characteristic. He was convinced that a prohibition of the movement would provoke anti-Dutch sentiments and would transform it into a political movement. The reason it took him so relatively long to reach a decision about the legal recognition was that he was waiting for a royal decree that would enable him to forbid organisations which posed a threat to public order. Immediately after this decree had been promulgated, he made his decision concerning Sarekat Islam. Of course, this royal decree enabled him to forbid branches of Sarekat Islam should they develop anti-government sentiments. In addition to these pragmatic motives, more idealistic motives also played a role in Idenburg's considerations. He regarded it as a good sign that the native population had begun to stand up for its own interests and protest about official arbitrariness.⁸

The solo congress

Towards the end of his life Sayyid 'Uthmân dealt extensively with Sarekat Islam, and now I shall present his views, because these also show his attitude

towards the colonial government. The first time Sayyid 'Uthmân expressed his views on Sarekat Islam in public was during the major Congress of Sarekat Islam which was held in the Sriwedari Garden of the Susuhunan in Surakarta on 23 March 1913. In the weekly *Hindia Serikat*, which the renowned activist Abdoel Muis had established in Bandung earlier in 1913 as 'the voice of the indigenous population in the Netherlands East Indies' (*Soeara boeat bangsa boemi poeterea di Hindia-Nederland*), the well-known journalist A.H. Wignjadisastra⁹ published a lively report of this congress, including a brief summary of the speech by Sayyid 'Uthmân. In order to be able to capture the general atmosphere of the congress and to place Sayyid 'Uthmân's speech in its context I will first summarise this report.¹⁰

On 22 March, the day before the actual congress was to be held, a preliminary meeting was convened in Solo which was attended by people from all over Java and was chaired by Tjokroaminoto, the Vice-President of Sarekat Islam Central Board from Surabaya, because he knew Malay well, in contrast to the chairperson of the Solo branch of Sarekat Islam who was more used to speaking Javanese.¹¹ In this meeting, matters like the statutes and questions about who could become a member of Sarekat Islam, who could become a member of the board, and budgetary issues¹² were discussed. Moreover, the son of the Sunan of Solo, Prince Ngabehi, was appointed patron of the organisation.¹³

On 23 March at 8 a.m., the venue, Taman Sri Wedari, was thronged. Among the 30,000 people attending¹⁴ were numerous journalists, representatives of many branches of Sarekat Islam, and civil servants like D.A. Rinkes (1878–1954), the Deputy Adviser for Native Affairs;¹⁵ the Assistant Resident of Solo, as well as Sayyid 'Uthmân, the 'adviser on Arab affairs' (*adviseur perkara orang Arab*). The first speaker was Tjokroaminoto, who pointed out that, as due to Sarekat Islam, the economic activities of the small people (*orang kecil*) had increased, as had general safety. All this clearly showed that Sarekat Islam had proved its worth as an organisation. Tjokroaminoto added that the legal recognition of Sarekat Islam was imminent. After his speech, the Dutch flag was hoisted, and praise for the Queen, her husband, Prince Hendrik, the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Sunan of Solo was expressed. After Tjokroaminoto, Sayyid 'Uthmân ascended the stage. The audience was curious to learn what he (the *mufti*) was about to say, because he was known as a traditionalist Muslim (*seorang santri kaoem koeno*), who had had a conflict with the Arab modernists (*kaoem moeda*) in Batavia about the organisation of the Arab school in Tanah Abang, which he did not like being managed in a European manner. Moreover, he was known for his rejection of European dress and other issues.¹⁶

The full text of this speech has been preserved in the archives of the Adviser for Native Affairs, G.A.J. Hazeu (1870–1929), who held this office from 1907 to 1913 and from 1917 to 1920.¹⁷ In these archives, kept in the Royal Institute for Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV),

Leiden, there are two identical handwritten copies of this speech. The text consists of one page and is in Malay in Arabic script. It seems likely that it had come into the possession of Hazeu through his deputy, Rinkes, who attended the congress in his capacity as Deputy Adviser for Native Affairs, as I mentioned above. Apparently, Rinkes had asked someone to make him a copy, since he was preparing an official report on Sarekat Islam for the Governor-General A.W.F. Idenburg on behalf of Hazeu.¹⁸

At the beginning of his speech, Sayyid ‘Uthmân introduced himself as the man ‘who had been accorded the rank of *Mufti* of Islam and that of *Mahdî al-anâm* (the One who gives Correct Guidance to the People) by the *ulama*, as well as the rank of Honorary Advisor for Arab Affairs by the Government.’ After giving the conventional praise of Allah, he mentioned that he had come at the request of the President to clarify the position of Islam. He stated that Islam is good and useful to those who follow its rules and forbids causing offence towards oneself, towards others and towards the state. Moreover, Islam prescribes that good be reciprocated with good. Sarekat Islam generates nothing but good and does no harm to the state. For this reason, people should be grateful to Sarekat Islam. Moreover, people should express their gratitude to the Sunan for having established Sarekat Islam.¹⁹ Furthermore, the board of Sarekat Islam should be thanked, because it promotes the observance of the duties of Islam and it prevents breaking Islamic laws. Consequently, it promotes well-being, safeguards against misery and brings ‘progress and profit in this world and the Hereafter’ (*kemajuan dan keuntungan dunya akhir*). Hereupon, Sayyid ‘Uthmân besought God to lead the policy of Sarekat Islam to perfection. The final passage of this speech is most interesting and reads in translation as follows:

Moreover, all of us should be grateful to the just administration of the Dutch Government which displays justice and solicitude. We may happily carry out our religious obligations without interference, yes it even supports us abundantly in our wish to perform our religious obligations by paying the salaries of the Muslim judges (*panghulus*) of the Religious Courts, and by closing down the Native Courts during the month of fasting, and by assisting in enlarging the mosques and other favours to which we have referred in our writings²⁰ and in our prayer for Her Majesty the Queen.²¹

According to the report in *Hindia Serikat*,²² after Sayyid ‘Uthmân’s speech, the atmosphere was rather rowdy as many had not been able to hear him because his voice was too weak. For this reason, his lecture was read out again by Hasan Ali Soerati.²³

After Sayyid ‘Uthmân, a number of other people gave speeches. Interestingly, one of these, another Arab, Sayyid Ahmad ibn Muhammad Al-Musawa, the President of the Arab Club ‘Moeroatul Ikhwan’ in Surabaya,

also pledged his full loyalty to the Dutch Government. Placing his hand on the Dutch flag he said, 'This is the flag which protects us by justice', which inspired many people to shout, 'Long live Queen Wilhelmina!'²⁴ The congress ended at noon.²⁵

Everything points to an amazingly pro-Dutch atmosphere during this congress, among all speakers and those present. This can be explained partly because Sarekat Islam was awaiting the decision of the Government with regard to its request for legal recognition and, for this reason, did not want to undermine this request by voicing anti-Dutch sentiments. More important, however, was the display of genuine appreciation for the Government's ethical policy in this period which aimed, as did Sarekat Islam, to improve the living conditions of the native population.²⁶

Aspiring to the legal recognition of Sarekat Islam

Sayyid 'Uthmân's main points, the Government's non-interference in religious matters and its facilitation of religion, were used in the preparation of the above-mentioned meeting of 29 March with the Governor-General Idenburg in which the Central Committee of Sarekat Islam aimed to clarify its request for the legal recognition of their organisation. This appears from an undated, handwritten document which is kept in the Hazeu archives. I think this document should be dated between the Solo Congress, which took place on 23 March, and the 29 March meeting. This document is headed by the following sentence: 'Request for the judgement of the government on four points from the grateful indigenous population' (*Permintaan timbangan keadilan didalam empat perkara dari bumiputra punya terima kasih padanya*). The first point underlines the gratitude felt by the indigenous population (*bumiputra*) towards the Government for not interfering in religious matters; the second point elaborates on this by mentioning government support for performing the *salat*, building mosques and in facilitating Muslim marriages and inheritance cases. Third, the Government is thanked for its protection of the lives, property and religion of the population. Fourth, the Government is thanked for its appreciation of the promotion of goodness among the people. Then, the *bumiputra* ask the Government to view Sarekat Islam against the background of these four points. On the first point, it is asked to confirm this principle, while on the second point it is requested to expand on this. On the third point, recognition (*permisi*) of Sarekat Islam is solicited, because this organisation is beneficial to the state, since its activities have resulted in the decline in theft and robbery and an increase in industry (*kerajinan*) and decent behaviour of the people. On the fourth point, it is underlined that the government policy of suppressing wickedness coincides with the aims of Sarekat Islam.²⁷

These same four considerations were taken up again and revised in another undated document which is also kept in the same file of the Hazeu

archives. This document was apparently meant for wider circulation among Sarekat Islam members because it was lithographed. This text follows the same argument more or less, stressing the beneficial effects to the Government of the rise in religiosity among Sarekat Islam members. It ends with the following observation, 'If there is no awe of God, the less awe will there be of the power of the state.'²⁸

A fatwa on Sarekat Islam

The next relevant document which deserves discussion is a handwritten fatwa in Malay about Sarekat Islam.²⁹ A fatwa is a piece of advice given by a scholar of Islam on request to discuss a particular topic from the point of view of Islamic law. The document is signed by Sayyid 'Uthmân and dated 7 April 1913 (*sic*).³⁰ The persons who requested this fatwa are given as follows: Haji Imam Mahbûb ibn Imâm 'Abd al-Hamîd; Sayyid Muhammad ibn 'Alwî al-Salîbiyyah; Haji Ilyâs Tanah Abang; the District *Panghulu*, Haji Shu'ayb; Haji Hasan (*guru mengaji*); the *wijkmeester* Arab, Shaykh 'Uthmân; the Hoofd

The request for a fatwa consists of four sub-questions. It commences with a general question on the nature of Sarekat Islam. Second, it raises the question of how Sarekat Islam should be judged from the point of view of the shariah in the light of its advice to its members to adhere to the rules of Islam, like praying, studying, fasting, leading a pious (*halal*) life, as well as the duty requiring members to urge one another to live according to the shariah and respect the order (*keselamatan*) of the state, and avoid forbidden activities, like charging interest, gambling and bearing false evidence. The third question raises the issue of oath taking.³¹ If it is possible to undertake lawful matters only under oath, is this oath then compulsory? The final question deals with the issue of Qur'an recitation, which is performed over water,³² or above a patient in order to heal him.

Before directly answering these four questions, Sayyid 'Uthmân set out to explain eleven general points which form the background to his answer. Here amongst other things, he argues that a Muslim should obey the rules of Islam, and urge other Muslims to do the same, and not harm the state. Obedience to the rules of Allah will lead to reward in this world and in the Hereafter. Likewise, a Muslim is obliged to put aside matters which Allah has prohibited, like omitting the *salat* and the fast and asking interest. Should a Muslim not comply with these prohibitions, he will be severely punished in the Afterlife. Every Muslim has a duty to remind other Muslims of these orders and prohibitions. Islam prescribes fraternity (*kesaudaraan*) and solidarity (*bertolong-tolongan*), as is clearly expressed in the Qur'anic verses: 'The believers are brothers' (49:10) and 'Assist each other

in piety and devotion' (5:2), while the act of prohibiting others from doing evil and reminding others to do good is prescribed in two Prophetic sayings. In his tenth point, Sayyid 'Uthmân mentions that if something which is compulsory can only be undertaken by performing another matter, then this other matter is also compulsory. The eleventh and final point underlines that the Qur'an itself mentions that the reciting of the Qur'an purifies the heart and cures the sick, as shown by the verse 'And we send down parts from the Qur'an which are a cure and blessing for the believers' (17:82).

After this eleven-points elaboration, Sayyid 'Uthmân answers the four questions addressed to him. In answering the first question, Sayyid 'Uthmân states that Sarekat Islam conforms to Islam in the sense that it urges people to obey the prescriptions and prohibitions of Islam. The second question is answered by his remarks stating that the members are obliged to remind one other to be good Muslims and to show solidarity, which are obligatory qualities for a Muslim. On the third question, Sayyid 'Uthmân mentions that the oath is a prerequisite for all the good things Sarekat Islam brings in its wake and is, therefore, compulsory. Finally, Sayyid 'Uthmân states that there is no objection to drinking water over which qur'anic verses have been recited in view of the verse referred to above. In general, Sayyid 'Uthmân regards Sarekat Islam as a beneficial organisation because it promotes religious life and encourages people to change their ways from those of evil people to those of good people who feel satisfied with the Government.³³

Selampai Tersulam

Some three weeks later, Sayyid 'Uthmân again took up most of these points, albeit systematically. In fact, in studying the works of Sayyid 'Uthmân, I have come across this phenomenon more often: first, his attention is drawn to a particular issue by a request for a fatwa, which indeed he has made himself, whereupon he elaborates the same issue in a more general, theoretical fashion in a separate brochure, which often no longer betrays its origin in the fatwa. The brochure in question is entitled *Selampai tersulam* and was published on 26 Jumâdâ al-awwal 1331 (3 May 1913) at Sayyid 'Uthmân's own lithographic press (see Figure 7.1). In the first section (*fasal*), this brochure sets out to explain that Islam consists of prescriptions and prohibitions which a Muslim is obliged to follow. Should a person not comply with this, he will be 'convicted by the state' (*dapat hukuman negeri*) in this life, and be given a very severe punishment in the Afterlife.³⁴ In the second section, it is said that Sarekat Islam complies with the rules of Islam, while in the third section, it is explained that 'the aim of Sarekat Islam is not to go on strike, nor boycott a particular ethnic group' (*tiadalah ada maksudnya karena bermogok daripada pekerjaan atau memboykot-boycot pada lain bangsa*).³⁵ On the contrary, the members of Sarekat

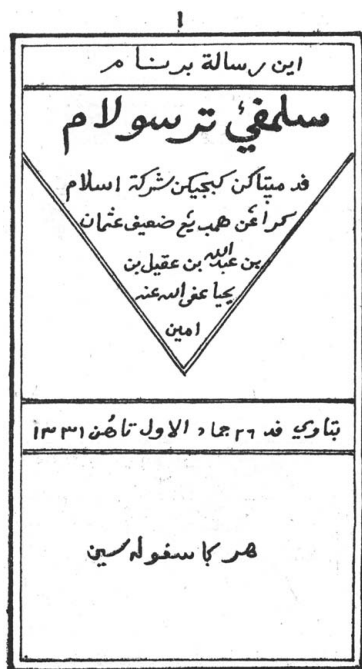


Figure 7.1 *Selampi tersulam* (1913).

Islam are expected to behave properly, and to ensure that the board of Sarekat Islam should consist of wise men. Finally, in the fourth section, the blessings of Sarekat Islam are summed up: more people are performing the *salat* to such an extent that all mosques are full; religion is being studied in more places; many shops have already been opened; and there is less theft and robbery. As a result of this, Sayyid ‘Uthmân states it is obvious that Sarekat Islam is advantageous to the state.³⁶

Sinar Istarlam

Because the discussions about Sarekat Islam continued unabated, approximately one and a half months later Sayyid ‘Uthmân published another pamphlet about the organisation, entitled *Sinar Istarlam*. On the title page, it is stated that the text was written ‘to explain the truth about Sarekat Islam’, that he published it in Batavia on 11 Rajab 1331 (16 June 1913), and that its price was 10 cents (see Figure 7.2). The text aims at refuting the objections to Sarekat Islam from three sides, the most virulent of which came from the Naqshabandiyya brotherhood.³⁷ These objections consisted of a fatwa which stated that Sarekat Islam was useless; second, the assertion that Sarekat Islam was a Christian organisation and that the water it used was baptismal water (*air Nasrani*); and third, the assertion that Sarekat Islam consisted of nothing but evil. Sayyid ‘Uthmân had been asked to

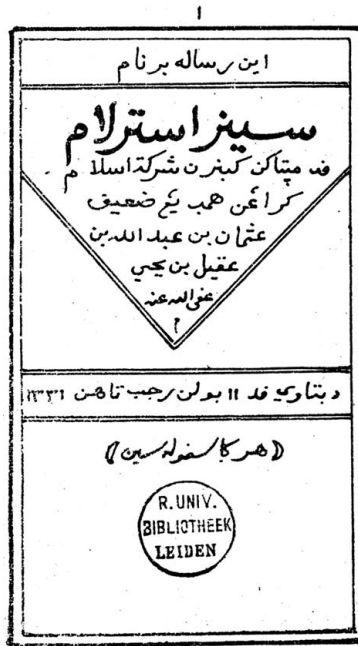


Figure 7.2 *Sinar Istarlam* (1913).

give a legal opinion about these three points, and for this reason he had written this brochure (*risala*) set out in five sections, in order to take away all doubt about Sarekat Islam.

In the first section he proves that Sarekat Islam is beneficial by quoting three texts. The first of these is a Prophetic tradition that reads, 'Who-soever calls for the true path, he will receive a reward for this, as well as the rewards from those who follow this [true path].' The second proof consists of a verse from the Qur'an, which reads: 'And who is better in speech than he who calls [for obedience] to God and does right' (41:33). The third proof of the benefits of Sarekat Islam is another qur'anic verse: 'Help each other in piety and devotion' (5:2). These three texts indicate precisely what Sarekat Islam stands for, and, hence, the first objection has been refuted.³⁸

In the second section, Sayyid 'Uthmân proves that the members of Sarekat Islam will receive benefit greatly on the basis of the qur'anic verse 'But what the believers will say when they are called to God and His Messenger in order that He will judge them, is: "We hear and we obey," and those are the successful' (24:51). The same point is proved by a Prophetic tradition that reads: 'If one accepts it and is grateful, he is counted among the believers.' In this same section, the allegation that Sarekat Islam members are Christian is refuted by the Prophetic saying, 'Whosoever calls a Muslim an unbeliever, is one himself'.³⁹

In the third section,⁴⁰ Sayyid ‘Uthmân tackles the issue of the oath which the members of Sarekat Islam were required to swear. Sarekat Islam had made this oath compulsory so that its members continued actively to honour their religious obligations and to avoid breaking its prohibitions. Its critics asserted the swearing of this oath was forbidden, because the Prophet had said: ‘There is no oath in Islam.’ However, according to Ibn al-Athîr⁴¹ in his *Kitâb al-nihâya* and al-Suyûtî⁴² in his book *Al-durr al-manthûr*, there were two meanings of the term oath in the pre-Islamic era: the first referred to a promise to kill and to rob, and oath in this sense was forbidden by the Prophet; second, it referred to a promise to promote the truth and to assist the oppressed, and oath in this sense was not forbidden by the Prophet but was greatly encouraged. This shows that the fatwa which cites this objection is based on ignorance and did not originate from reliable *ulama*, as it ignores the Prophet’s words: ‘Knowledge is based on teaching’. According to Sayyid ‘Uthmân, the mere reading of books without the guidance of a teacher is not enough, as is illustrated by a statement of Ibn Hajar.⁴³ Moreover, a Prophetic saying is quoted: ‘One who gives a *fatwa* without knowledge will be cursed by the angels of Heaven and Earth.’⁴⁴

In the same section, Sayyid ‘Uthmân also goes into the allegation that Sarekat Islam was Christian and the water used was baptismal water. To refute these accusations, he again quoted the Prophetic saying already mentioned: ‘Whosoever calls a Muslim an unbeliever, is one himself’. Moreover, Sayyid ‘Uthmân remarked that these allegations should not be taken seriously because they originated from the circles of the Naqshabandiyya brotherhood. In order to understand the iniquity of this brotherhood, Sayyid ‘Uthmân referred his readers to two treatises he had written on the subject, namely *Al-wathîqa al-wafiyya* and *Al-nasiha al-anîqa*.⁴⁵ In general, it would be impossible to claim that Sarekat Islam consisted of nothing but wickedness, because through the activities of Sarekat Islam now many people perform the *salat*; many people refrain from sin; there is less theft and robbery; and many people have grown more industrious in striving to lead a pious life.

In the fourth section, Sayyid ‘Uthmân stressed that people should not issue false fatwas and should not offer or accept bribes.⁴⁶

In order to get to know Sayyid ‘Uthmân’s attitude towards the colonial government, the fifth section (13–16) is the most interesting. It deals with the theme that every Muslim should reciprocate the good deeds of the people who had treated them well. This principle is illustrated by the Prophetic saying, ‘Whosoever confers a benefit upon you, should be repaid by you’. Interestingly, Sayyid ‘Uthmân elaborates on this point by indicating the benefits of ‘the just administration of the Dutch government for those who live in the shelter of its Kingdom’ (*keadilan governemen Hulanda kepada yang berteduh dibawah kerajahannya*). Since this is a very central passage to understanding Sayyid ‘Uthmân’s attitude towards the Government, I translate this in its entirety:

It is necessary for us to remember duly the goodness of this government, which manifests itself in a huge number of ways. The first and most important of these is the contract (*kuntrak*) with the government that there will be no interference in religious matters with the agreement between all local rulers, which implies that a Muslim is not forbidden to behave in a religious manner. Moreover, this goodness is also manifest in giving satisfaction to the Muslim population who show religious behaviour, by paying the salaries of the Muslim judges (*panghulus*) of the Religious Courts (*rad agama*), and by giving the officials of the mosques and the religious teachers the opportunity (*perai*) [to do their tasks], and by supporting the building of mosques, and by recessing the Native Courts (*landrad*) during the month of Ramadan, and by other forms of goodness which have been born of sympathy and generosity towards the inhabitants of the country for hundreds of years.⁴⁷

Sayyid 'Uthmân's conclusion is that Muslims should repay this generosity by showing gratitude to the administration and never breaking its laws. This would guarantee that the Government would live up to its agreement not to interfere in religious matters.⁴⁸

A poster on the doors of the mosques

Another unique document is a poster, which is not dated but must have been drawn up after the brochure just discussed. This is obvious from a letter which Sayyid 'Uthmân wrote to C. Snouck Hurgronje on 4 October 1913 (cf. *infra*). It is a small poster printed in big letters, consisting of 'Advice' (*nasihat*) in Malay given by Sayyid 'Uthmân. The copy which I have seen is kept in the KITLV and bears a handwritten note in Arabic which reads: 'This is what the Government (*al-dawla*) has had printed and ordered to be hung on the doors of the mosques', confirmed by the letter just mentioned. I translate this text as follows:

Advice of Sayyid 'Uthmân in line with religious teaching and with a pure heart towards the state (*negeri*).

This advice is an explanation and clarification for those people who do not yet know what Sarekat Islam is and who do not yet understand what its aims are.

To start with, you should be aware that the rise of Sarekat Islam and its aims relates to the two matters which are mentioned below.

Firstly, its goal is to advise the Muslim population to assist one another (*bertolong-tolongan*) in carrying out the obligations of religion in performing the *salat* and in giving instruction on the rules concerning religious obligations, neither of which do any harm to the government (*negeri*) or any other. The sole aim is to please Almighty God and safeguard against His Punishment.

The second aim of Sarekat Islam is to advise the indigenous population (*bumiputra*) to assist one another in carrying out the obligations of religion in order to strive for a pious life (*kehidupan halal*), so that they will be protected against the spread of poverty and freed from inferiority.

Because of these two matters, we trust that Sarekat Islam will remain loyal (*kebajikan*) towards the government, while it will show its benefits to the government even more than it has done already.

Moreover, you have to know that it is not the aim of Sarekat Islam for its members to become aggressive or arrogant or do anything harmful. Any suspicion of this kind is absolutely out of order! And likewise this conduct is abhorrent to Sarekat Islam. On the contrary, it brings the name of Sarekat Islam into discredit. People who behave like this should be stopped from doing so.

[signed] Sayyid 'Uthmân⁴⁹

A letter to Leiden

The final document which I would like to discuss here is not part of the ongoing debate on Sarekat Islam but presents a more contemplative view on the issue. This document is a private letter which Sayyid 'Uthmân sent from Batavia on 4 October 1913 to his former superior in the Office for Native Affairs, C. Snouck Hurgronje, who had settled in Leiden after his return from the Indies in 1906.⁵⁰ In this letter, Sayyid 'Uthmân looks back on the whole issue in the following manner:

As far as the news about Sarekat Islam is concerned, we looked into this carefully after we heard about it, and we had not ceased to do so, when its leaders telegraphed from Solo to ask us to come, as well as Mister Rinkes. Thereupon, all of us went to Solo where we found around 30,000 or more people. Their leader Tjokroaminoto gave a speech in Javanese and in Malay. After this, I was requested to deliver a speech, which I did and my speech was reported in the newspapers.

Then, the people from Batavia asked me about the cause of Sarekat Islam and I replied to their questions after I had consulted with Mr Hazeu and Mr Rinkes. I gave them my answers and I printed many copies of my speech.

Next, I printed the brochure *Selampi tersulam*. After they had slandered and contested the cause of Sarekat Islam because of the intrigues of those who hated it, I wrote the brochure *Sinar Istarlam*. Both brochures I have enclosed with this letter.

When we observed the riff-raff undertaking actions directed against the goal of Sarekat Islam, we prepared a declaration and we asked the government to print it and to order it to be hung on the doors of the

mosques, which was done. This has also been included in this letter along with the two brochures.⁵¹

Whenever we have written a brochure or anything else, we have appealed to the board (*bistiyûr*) or the secretary [of Sarekat Islam] for advice, but they did not respond because of the shortcomings and betrayal of some or even the majority of the members of the board.

At the moment, Sarekat Islam is in great turmoil and we do not know what its fate will be. God willing, the facts will reach you on our part.⁵²

This letter is noteworthy because it underlines how close Sayyid ‘Uthmân was to the Dutch administration – he claims he even consulted the leadership of the Office for Native Affairs before delivering a fatwa! – and how the Government was actively involved in fostering the pro-government attitude within Sarekat Islam by financing and disseminating printed materials.

The dissemination of Sayyid ‘Uthmân’s ideas

Interestingly, the ideas of Sayyid ‘Uthmân on Sarekat Islam were also spread by publishers other than his own press. For instance, the brochure *Selampai tersulam* was reprinted with leadtype by the Setia Usaha publishing house in Surabaya, ‘in Jumâdâ al-awwal 1331’, shortly after its original printing date of 3 May 1913. This at least shows that the opinions of Sayyid ‘Uthmân concerning Sarekat Islam were also winning a following in Surabaya. At that time, the Setia Usaha was still in the hands of Hasan Ali Soerati, before it came under the control of Tjokroaminoto.⁵³

Sayyid ‘Uthmân’s ideas on Sarekat Islam were also disseminated beyond Java. An interesting illustration of this is that the full text of the speech which he gave in Solo on 23 March was included in the famous reformist journal *Al-Munir*, published in Padang, West Sumatra. This text was sent to the editors from Batavia by a certain Tengku Muhammad Nur al-Din.⁵⁴

Moreover, Sayyid ‘Uthmân’s opinions were known and appreciated in the Jawa colony in Mecca, where a separate brochure was published to convince its readers that Sarekat Islam in Java was not inconsistent with Islam, and, therefore, there could be no objection to anyone joining.⁵⁵ This Malay brochure was published in ‘the last days of the month of Shawwâl 1331’ (end of September 1913) and bears the Arabic title *Nasîhat al-arhâm li-dukhûl fî amr Sharîkat al-Islâm* (*Advice to Relatives to Join the Cause of Sarekat Islam*). At the top of the first page of the booklet is mentioned that it was written by a man called Muhammad Hasan ibn Qâsim, ‘originating from the area of Tangerang in the region of Batavia, resident (*mukim*) in the Honoured City of Mecca.’ This text mentions that Sayyid ‘Uthmân, who is characterised as ‘the star of Batavia in this era’, approved of Sarekat Islam.⁵⁶ This evidence clearly indicates that Sayyid ‘Uthmân’s opinions were widespread and were regarded as authoritative.

Conclusion

The views of Sayyid 'Uthmân on Sarekat Islam are important because they were widespread and will undoubtedly have played a role in framing public opinion about this organisation and how it should behave towards the Government. Moreover, his views are interesting because he was not only one of the most prominent *ulamas* of his era, but also the 'Honorary Adviser for Arab Affairs' to the colonial administration. Summarising his opinions from the above-mentioned documents, we see that Sayyid 'Uthmân supported Sarekat Islam wholeheartedly, because he regarded it primarily as a *dakwah* organisation. This perception of Sarekat Islam will have been based on his experience with the Batavia branch of the organisation, which indeed stressed the religious character of the movement.⁵⁷ Sayyid 'Uthmân believed Sarekat Islam promoted religious life by stimulating its members to adhere to the prescriptions of Islam and by preventing its members from breaking the laws of Islam.⁵⁸ Moreover, in his view, Sarekat Islam worked to promote the progress of the population: it stimulated economic activities among the population and as a result of its rise, there had been a decline in theft and robbery.

In his dealings with Sarekat Islam, Sayyid 'Uthmân revealed his opinion of the Government explicitly. He praised the Government extensively because it was just and took care of the people's welfare, while he highly appreciated the policy of non-interference in religious matters. Consequently, the Muslim population was free to practise its religion without any obstruction. Nor was this all, for the Government even went a step further by providing facilities for Islam and by taking Islamic prescriptions into consideration in its policies. As examples of this, Sayyid 'Uthmân mentioned the paying of the salaries of Muslim judges (*panghulus*), subvention in the building of mosques, permission given to religious preachers and teachers to work, and the respecting of the month of Ramadan by the temporary closure of the native courts in this fasting period. I shall not go into the question of to what extent this rather rosy picture of Dutch Islamic policy which Sayyid 'Uthmân painted corresponds to historical reality,⁵⁹ but what matters here is that this picture is used to legitimise the rule of the Dutch infidels. Of central importance to Sayyid 'Uthmân was that the Government was just and did not obstruct Muslims in the observance of their religion.

In trying to understand Sayyid 'Uthmân's motives for accepting the Dutch Government, perhaps we should take reasons of a biographical nature into consideration. As I mentioned above, he had spent many of his formative years in the Arabian Peninsula. Both the time he spent in Mecca (1841–7) and his residence in the Hadramaut (1847–62) were rather unstable from a political point of view,⁶⁰ and this experience may have contributed to his appreciation of the Dutch administration, which was more stable and less arbitrary. Second, it is possible to wonder if Sayyid

‘Uthmân’s position as adviser to the Government and the salary he received for his efforts played a role in his approval of Dutch rule. I think this is not the case, because he had already shown himself favourably disposed towards the Dutch before he became involved in the colonial administration.⁶¹ Nevertheless, this position may have made him feel obligated at times to voice his approval of Dutch rule explicitly.

Whatever role these biographical motives might have played, the main reason for Sayyid ‘Uthmân’s support of the Dutch rule in the Netherlands East Indies lies in the classical Sunni Islamic state philosophy. In this, it is stated that any form of legitimate government is better than anarchy, even if this government is evil, or even infidel. What is important is the avoidance of *fitna*. In early Islamic history, this term referred to periods of disturbances and civil war, caused by deviant sects or schools which broke away from mainstream Islam and, therefore, endangered the purity of the faith. In later usage, this term was used for any revolt or disturbance, but the theological undertones expressing the fear that political chaos would affect the faith remained strong. This is the reason the believers were obliged to obey the established sovereign, as long as his orders did not contradict Islam.⁶²

Consequently, in legitimising Dutch rule as he perceived it, Sayyid ‘Uthmân found himself perfectly within the boundaries of orthodoxy. As a result of this fundamental attitude, Sayyid ‘Uthmân was able to live the life of a good Muslim in the Netherlands East Indies, despite the fact that the Government was infidel.⁶³

Acknowledgements

I thank the participants in the Conference in Political Legitimacy in Islamic Asia, Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore, 25–6 April 2005 for their comments on the earlier draft of this paper.

Notes

- 1 At least 122 different titles of his writings are known; see for some general comments N. Kaptein, ‘Sayyid ‘Uthmân on the Legal Validity of Documentary Evidence’, *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land-en Volkenkunde*, 1997, Vol. 153–1, pp. 97–101.
- 2 H. Benda, ‘Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje and the Foundation of Dutch Islamic Policy in Indonesia’, in *Continuity and Change in Southeast Asia: Collected Journal Articles of H. Benda*, New Haven, Conn.: Yale University, 1972, pp. 83–92.
- 3 On the title page, it is mentioned that the poem was composed by ‘the humble servant Shaykh Ibn ‘Alwî ibn ‘Uthmân ibn Yahyâ’.
- 4 Ibn ‘Alwî ibn ‘Uthmân, *Qamar al-Zamân menyatakan keadaannya al-marhûm al-Habîb ‘Uthmân dan ta’rikhnya*, Weltevreden: ‘Alwî ibn ‘Uthmân, no year, pp. 1–9; A. Azra, ‘A Hadhrami Religious Scholar in Indonesia: Sayyid ‘Uthmân’, in U. Freitag and W.G. Clarence-Smith (eds), *Hadhrami Traders, Scholars, and Statesmen in the Indian Ocean: 1750s–1960s*, Leiden: Brill, 1997, pp. 250–2.

- 5 N. Kaptein, 'Arabophobia and the War against Mysticism: How Sayyid 'Uthmān Became Advisor to the Netherlands Colonial Administration', Unpublished lecture given at the University of Michigan, 7 February 2005.
- 6 T. Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion: Popular Radicalism in Java, 1912–1926*, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1990, pp. 41–90.
- 7 S.L. van der Wal, *De opkomst van de nationalistische beweging in Nederlands-Indië: een bronnenpublikatie*, Groningen: Wolters, 1967, pp. 161–4.
- 8 This information is taken from personal letters written by Idenburg in which he explained his views on Sarekat Islam to Queen Wilhelmina and the Calvinist scholar and statesman, A. Kuyper (1837–1920), dated 25 May 1913 and 1 June 1913, respectively; see J. de Bruijn and G. Puchinger (eds), *Briefwisseling Kuyper-Idenburg*, Franeker: Wever, 1985, pp. 116–18 and 367–70. At the departure of Idenburg as Governor-General in 1916, Snouck Hurgronje highly praised Idenburg for his dealings with Sarekat Islam, which Snouck considered the clearest proof of the progress made by the indigenous population, see C. Snouck Hurgronje, 'De Sarikat Islam in het credit van het koloniaal bestuur', *Verspreide Geschriften*, Bonn und Leipzig: Schroeder, Vol. IV, No. 2, 1924, pp. 407–10.
- 9 See on him, D. Rinkes, 'Zeer geheime missive van den Adviseur voor Inlandsche Zaken aan den Gouverneur-Generaal van Nederlandsch-Indië, gedagtekend Weltevreden, 13 Mei 1913 No. 46', *Bescheiden betreffende de Vereeniging 'Sarekat Islam'*, Batavia: Landsdrukkerij, 1913, p. 30. He was the Secretary of the Bandung branch of Sarekat Islam.
- 10 A.H. Wignjadisastra, 'Congres Sarekat Islam di Solo', *Hindia Serikat*, 1913, Vol. I–IV, pp. 61–62 and Vol. I–V, pp. 72–4.
- 11 This suggests that Tjokro's rise to prominence over others within Sarekat Islam might also have had to do with his mastery of Malay. See on Malay as the language of the modernist movement, Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion*, p. 62–3.
- 12 For example, the question of whether or not Sarekat Islam money might be put in a bank, because a bank provided interest which is, of course, against Islamic law.
- 13 Later, this son went to the Netherlands to study Javanology (Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion*, p. 6 footnote 6). Shortly after the congress, the Sunan ordered his son to withdraw as adviser, which indicates a decline in his initial enthusiasm for Sarekat Islam on the part of the Sunan (Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion*, p. 55).
- 14 According to the Dutch historian A.P.E. Korver, *Sarekat Islam 1912–1916: Opkomst, bloei en structuur van Indonesië's eerste massabeweging*, Amsterdam: Historisch Seminarium, 1982, p. 24, the estimates of the number of people who attended differ from 7,000 to 20,000.
- 15 On him, H. Aqib Suminto, *Politik Islam Hindia Belanda: Het Kantoor voor Inlandsche Zaken, cetakan kedua*, Jakarta: LP3ES, 1986, pp. 132–8.
- 16 Wignjadisastra, 'Congres Sarekat Islam di Solo'.
- 17 Suminto, *Politik Islam Hindia Belanda*, pp. 125–32.
- 18 Rinkes, 'Zeer geheime missive'.
- 19 It was a common misunderstanding in the early days of Sarekat Islam for the Sunan of Solo to be regarded as the founder of Sarekat Islam. Korver, *Sarekat Islam*, pp. 81–2, links this to messianistic expectations which were then in circulation. Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion*, pp. 66–7, maintains that Sarekat Islam itself was the cause of this millenarianism, since its rise really shook the traditional Dutch–Javanese hierarchical order, for example as a result of its democratic attitude, the custom of natives being allowed to sit on chairs and the mingling of different social strata in meetings, and so forth.
- 20 This refers to scattered references throughout his works and, as far as I am aware, not to writings which are entirely devoted to the topic.

- 21 This prayer was in Arabic and said in September 1898 on the occasion of the inauguration of Queen Wilhelmina. See for this text and the reactions it evoked, Nico Kaptein, 'The Sayyid and the Queen: Sayyid 'Uthmân on Queen Wilhelmina's inauguration on the throne of the Netherlands in 1898', *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 1998, Vol. 9-2, pp. 160-1 and 177 (Arabic). See H 1083, No. 34, pp. 84-5. This item, which contains various documents related to Sarekat Islam in 1913, is kept in the archives of the Royal Institute for Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies, KITLV, Leiden.
- 22 Wignjadisastra, 'Congres Sarekat Islam di Solo'.
- 23 See on him, Rinkes, 'Zeer geheime missive', p. 31. He was of Indian origin, and living in Surabaya. He was the head of the N.V. Setija Oesaha publisher, and accountant at the Oetoesan Hindia. He was regarded as the commercial mastermind behind Sarekat Islam.
- 24 This information is confirmed in Rinkes, 'Zeer geheime missive', p. 32.
- 25 Wignjadisastra, 'Congress Sarekat Islam di Solo'. See also Sartono Kartodirdjo, (ketua redaksi), *Sarekat Islam Lokal*, Jakarta: Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia, 1975, pp. 342-3.
- 26 Robert van Niel, *The Emergence of the Modern Indonesian Elite*, Dordrecht/Cinnamon: Foris Publications, 1984, p. 94.
- 27 KITLV, H 1083, 34, p. 82.
- 28 KITLV, H 1083, 34, p. 83.
- 29 The fatwa by Sayyid 'Uthmân on Sarekat Islam, dated 7 April 1913 is kept in the Oriental Manuscript Department of Leiden University Library (Cod. Or. 7057 A (4)). In a letter to Snouck Hurgronje, dated 4 October 1913, Sayyid 'Uthmân mentions that he disseminated many copies of this fatwa in print (cf. infra).
- 30 The Arabs in the Netherlands East Indies often used the Western and not the Muslim calendar.
- 31 This practice possibly originated in Chinese secret societies which were the precursors of some local Sarekat Islam branches. This aspect of Sarekat Islam, as well as other secret signs, caused the Government to be highly suspicious; see Rinkes, 'Zeer geheime missive', pp. 37-9; Korver, *Sarekat Islam*, p. 21 and pp. 185-9.
- 32 The drinking of a glass of water was part of the oath taking ceremony, Korver, *Sarekat Islam*, p. 186.
- 33 Leiden University Library, Cod. Or. 7057 A (4).
- 34 Sayyid 'Uthmân, *Selampai tersulam*, Batavia: the author, 1331 (1913), p. 3.
- 35 Ibid., p. 6.
- 36 Ibid., pp. 7-8.
- 37 At the beginning of the 1880s, Sayyid 'Uthmân had been engaged in vehement polemics with this mystical brotherhood, see Kaptein, *Arabophobia*.
- 38 Sayyid 'Uthman, *Sinar istarlam*, Batavia: the author, 1331 (1913), pp. 3-5.
- 39 Ibid., pp. 6-7.
- 40 Ibid., pp. 7-12.
- 41 Scholar from Mosul, Iraq (1149-1210), famous for his dictionary of difficult words in the Prophetic tradition literature, see B. Lewis, V.L. Ménage, C. Pellat and J. Schacht (eds), *The Encyclopaedia of Islam (EI2)*, 1986, Leiden: Brill, Vol. III, pp. 723-4.
- 42 Famous Egyptian scholar (1445-1505), see C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs and G. Lecomte (eds), *The Encyclopaedia of Islam (EI2)*, 1997, Leiden: Brill, Vol. IX, pp. 913-16.
- 43 Famous Shaf'ite authority, especially in jurisprudence (1504-67), active in Mecca, see *EI2*, Vol. III, pp. 778-9.

- 44 It is evident that Sayyid 'Uthmân was addressing a particular opponent (or group of opponents) here, but I do not know who this was.
- 45 Both treatises were published in 1883, see Kaptein, *Arabophobia*.
- 46 Sayyid 'Uthman, *Sinar istarlam*, pp. 12–13. Once again, Sayyid 'Uthmân is directing himself to a personal opponent whom he utterly despises. I do not know who this is.
- 47 Ibid., pp. 14–15.
- 48 Ibid., pp. 15–16.
- 49 This document was discovered in a file with other documents in the KITLV library in Leiden in the autumn of 2004. This file most probably originates from the personal library of Snouck Hurgronje. I thank the KITLV librarian Sirtjo Koolhof for drawing my attention to these materials.
- 50 In the Oriental Department of Leiden University Library, twelve letters in Arabic from Sayyid 'Uthmân to Snouck Hurgronje are preserved in the latter's archive (Cod. Or. 8952).
- 51 As mentioned above, the KITLV copy of this poster has a handwritten note on it which indicates that the document was meant to be hung on the doors of the mosque. Most probably, this KITLV copy is the one which Sayyid 'Uthmân had sent to Snouck Hurgronje.
- 52 Leiden University Library Cod. Cod. Or. 8952.
- 53 Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion*, p. 54.
- 54 Ucapan yang mulia Tuan Sayyid 'Uthmân', *al-Munir*, Jumada al-awwal, 22 April 1913, Vol. IV no. 3, pp. 49–50. I thank Jajat Burhanudin for this reference.
- 55 See also Th.W. Juynboll, 'Die 'Sarèkat Islam': Bewegung auf Java', *Der Islam*, 1914, Vol. 5, pp. 154–59.
- 56 Muhammad Hasan ibn Qâsim, *Nasîhat al-arhâm li-dukhûl fî amr Sharîkat al-Islâm*, Makka: al-Turki, 1331 (1913), p. 5. The brochure is partly in poetry. The Malay verse praising Sarekat Islam reads: *apalagi suda mufakat dengan Habib 'Uthmân l bintang Betawi di ini zaman*.
- 57 Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion*, p. 57.
- 58 In Banten, West Java, there were also *ulama* who disapproved of Sarekat Islam, because they regarded this as an unlawful innovation (*bid'a*). According to A. Djajadiningrat, *Herinneringen van Pangeran Aria Achmad Djajadiningrat*, Amsterdam-Batavia: Kolff, 1936, pp. 285–9, they adopted this position because they feared their own material interests would be affected by Sarekat Islam.
- 59 Kaptein, 'The Sayyid and the Queen', p. 162.
- 60 See W.W. Ochsenwald, *Religion, Society and the State in Arabia: The Hijaz under Ottoman Control, 1840–1908*, Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1984, pp. 131–7, and U. Freitag, *Indian Ocean Migrants and State Formation in Hadhramaut*, Leiden: Brill, 2003, pp. 61–77, respectively.
- 61 Kaptein, *Arabophobia*.
- 62 See *EI2*, Vol. II, pp. 930–1.
- 63 Further research into Sayyid 'Uthmân's attitude towards the Government is necessary to supplement the work which has been done already, see, for example, for the permission of the Dutch Government to appoint Muslim judges, Azra, 'A Hadhrami Religious Scholar in Indonesia' in U. Freitag and W.G. Clarence-Smith (eds), *Hadhrami Traders*, p. 253; for the permission to use written evidence in the Muslim courts, see Kaptein, 'Sayyid 'Uthmân on the legal validity of documentary evidence', p. 94.

8 Power and Islamic legitimacy in Pakistan

Imran Ali

In Pakistan, the distribution of power, and access to power, has been shaped by historical trends extending from the period of British colonial rule, prior to independence in 1947. To some extent, even earlier transitions, during the late Mughal Empire, impacted on the contours of power in contemporary Pakistan. The role of religion and religious forces in processes of historical change, and their relationship to power and political legitimacy, is critical for understanding the alignments and interactions of state and society in Pakistan. Religious discourse, especially within the Islamic tradition, has at times significantly influenced the articulation of power and authority. However, religion was by no means the sole, or even necessarily the most critical, arbiter of the course of historical developments in this region. It is important to show when and how this has occurred, as well as the nature of its impact on social and political structures. This chapter will, therefore, attempt to decipher the role of religious ideas, attitudes and identities, within the wider context of the underlying processes and mentalities that have shaped the political environment in this region in recent decades.

The current concern with religion as the subject of discourse has clearly affected historical interpretation as well. Earlier subjectivities, either from an Orientalist or communal tradition, have also enjoyed undue longevity. Even the earliest set of interactions, the eighth-century Arab takeover of southern Pakistan, have been adversely viewed by British historians, followed by Indian ones. The Arabs have been accused of forcible conversions and other depredations on the local population, whereas recent research, using contemporary records, has refuted such allegations.¹ Even the early eleventh-century forays by Mahmud Ghazni from Afghanistan, though clearly destructive for human and spiritual life, did not involve any massacres of Hindu populations as a matter of policy. However, the Ghaznavids did systematically massacre Muslim Shias in the Ismailite kingdom of Multan, in an effort to root out Ismaili Shia influence in the central Pakistan area.² Again, the later and less ephemeral Turko-Afghan intruders were depicted in contemporary records as Turkic (*turushka*) rather than Islamic and were viewed more within an indigenous context of dynastic

rivalries and hostilities.³ Their success was attributable less to religious factors than to more flexible military manoeuvres and superior cavalry.⁴

Muslim political ascendancy in south Asia also did not entail any undue stress on religion as a factor in the exercise of authority. In the Sultanate of Delhi, the Deccan kingdoms and the Mughal Empire, the major Muslim polities of south Asia, the rulers could not afford to alienate a preponderantly Hindu majority, by pursuing a proselytising or ideological orientation. Faced with the plurality of worship systems and caste structures, their approach remained pragmatic, concerned more with the palpable benefits of retaining power. Discriminatory policies were uncommon, beyond perhaps the levying of *jizya*, or tax on non-believers. Hindu groups continued as military and public functionaries and retained their hold on business and commerce, though many artisanal groups chose Islam.⁵ With the Mughals, non-Muslims could reach the highest offices in the land, while intermarriage with Rajput lineages diluted the 'foreignness' of royalty. Akbar's syncretistic religious formulation, the *Din-i-Ilahi*, failed to outlive him, but it did reflect the religious ferment of a pluralistic environment, as did ideas of religious reform and revival among such pioneering Muslim thinkers as Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi. Even the purported biases of the later Mughal emperor, Aurangzeb, do not stand up to objective research, which has failed to identify sustained policies, or even any significant acts, of religious suppression of the Hindu majority.⁶ Indeed, a mortal blow to Mughal power came from incursions by fellow Muslims, Nadir Shah from Iran and Ahmed Shah Abdali from Afghanistan; though it proved beyond the capacity of these raiders, or of any of the local factions, to resurrect another Muslim empire.⁷

During the period of British rule, both the basis and articulation of power remained essentially secular, though certain religious elements were incorporated to play a supportive role. In the region that became Pakistan, the most significant historical development was the colonisation of new agricultural land, through the construction of a large network of perennial canals.⁸ Extensive allotments to the landlord and upper peasant segments cemented their support for colonial rule, with the further entrenchment of existing incumbencies in landholding status.⁹ Additionally, large land allocations for soldier settlement and the breeding of cavalry horses enhanced the stature of the military, in a region that already provided an inordinate scale of recruitment to the British Indian army.¹⁰ Control by the civil bureaucracy of land allocations and transfers, and centralised irrigation management, completed a nexus of power and resource absorption from which the common people were effectively excluded.¹¹

Consequently, nationalist organisations remained weak in this region. In contrast to the inroads by the Indian National Congress in the Hindu majority provinces, the main Muslim party, the Muslim League, had only a nominal presence in the future Pakistan area.¹² This amounted to only a single seat in the legislature of Punjab province a mere decade before

independence, with all the other Muslim seats passing to the pro-British Unionist Party.¹³ In Sindh, the Muslim League was itself the party of Muslim landlords, who were not anti-British. In Frontier, the large landlords also belonged to the Muslim League, while smaller landowners were mobilised in a political movement, the Khudai Khidmatgar, which was actually in alliance with the Indian National Congress.¹⁴ Significantly, after independence its leadership remained at odds with the Pakistani establishment. The 'retardation' of nationalism, along with the concentration of authority and resources with upper social segments, proved to have far-reaching consequences for post-independence political economy.¹⁵

If nationalist politics were weak, the religious factor was also not uniformly important in defining the contours of authority in this region. Nor was power essentially shaped by the religious idiom, at least during British rule. Religion could at critical junctures play a pivotal role in historical transitions.¹⁶ It was crucial in the creation of Pakistan, won through the accession of the masses, expressed in intense violence, to the idea of a communal resolution to the predicaments of British Indian decolonisation. However, there was no linear passage from religious philosophy to decisive political action. During colonial rule, the Pakistan area was not a major focus of Islamic thought, schools and movements. One reason was that the disruption in post-Mughal Muslim rule, brought about by the Sikh interregnum, denied patronage to the *ulama*. This lack of continuity contrasted with the Gangetic plain, where Muslim successor states provided a base for movements of religious reform and redefinition, such as the Deobandis, Bareilvis, Jamaat-i-Ahle Sunnat, Ahl-e Hadees, Tableeghi Jamaat and Jamiat-i-Ulema-i-Hind. Nor was there any phenomenon comparable to the Faraizi movement, popular among the Muslim peasantry of Bengal. Such ideas and movements did influence and impact on the Muslims of the Indus region, but their focal points remained further east.¹⁷

Though wary of the *ulama* and their theological conundrums, the British were well aware of the significance of religion for social control. They employed the new hydraulic resources, and extended administrative patronage, to consolidate the position of compliant intermediaries in rural Islam. In both Punjab and Sindh, the British propitiated families of *pirs* and caste Syeds, many linked to influential shrines or claiming descent from the prophet Muhammad.¹⁸ Such groups were allotted irrigated land or benefited from the extension of canal irrigation to their proprietary holdings. They in turn helped with military recruitment, performed demi-official functions, and in general lent their support to colonial rule.¹⁹ Thus, Muslim yet Brahmanistic religious castes, and 'sacred' families, that had not been prominent in pre-British times, were aggrandised in order to help legitimise colonial power. Matrimonial alliances with the landed elite were not uncommon, and over time some families became as identified with the landed interest as with spiritual values. The role, and approach to authority, of such intermediaries was palpably different from either the theological

or reformist focus of religious scholars and activists, and there clearly remained underlying tensions between them.

While Islam may not have been a major galvanising political force, at least till the final turn towards Pakistan, it nevertheless retained an innate significance in shaping identities and mentalities. For a population that was predominantly rural, much of religious belief and practice centred around the sufi and *pir* traditions, with an emphasis on shrines of greater and lesser standing. While non-Muslims also tended to adhere to their 'spiritual' power, the shrines had helped to sustain Muslim identity over generations, perhaps more so than the interdiction of the *ulama*.²⁰ The families of *saj-jada nashins*, or custodians, of the major shrines could also exercise considerable, though not in all cases decisive, social influence, on behalf of both imperialism and the post-colonial state. These interventions involved such varying goals as army recruitment in the two world wars, endorsing candidates or personally standing for elections, the occasional opposition to government policies, and most tellingly in gaining the Muslim population's accession to Pakistan.²¹ Since 1947, their participation in politics has not receded. They have enjoyed a continued presence in the major political parties, as well as in the personalised electoral experiments, or outright nominations to office, favoured by military regimes.

There has also been a long-standing contestation, which is still ongoing, regarding the relationship of the Sufi tradition with 'pure' Islam. In vying for the space of Islamic legitimacy, religious scholars and reformers have steadfastly criticised shrine and *pir* orientation as a relapse from genuine Islam. However, the intensity of these refutations has been inconsistent. The *ulama* of the Deobandi school have endeavoured especially to discourage this tendency. The Barelvis, while not condoning the excesses of shrine worship, are more accepting of the Sufi tradition, and acknowledge the role of shrines in maintaining Muslim identity.²² Other orders emanate from the Sufi exegesis itself, such as the Chishtis and Qadiris. From the late nineteenth century, some *pirs* within this tradition, influenced by revivalist ideas among religious scholars in south Asian Islam, have also adopted and projected reformist notions.²³ Since 1947, a critique of the shrine-*pir* ethos has also come from modernist, secular elements, who equate the role of shrines with atavism and backwardness and with the efforts of a combined traditionalist elite and authoritarian establishment to keep the masses steeped in superstition and ignorance.

Islam also provided the basis for the articulation of a wide range of intellectual and social movements. Apart from the Deobandis and Barelvis, several other Sunni Muslim movements of revival and reform spread in the Pakistan area before and after 1947. The Tableeghi Jamaat, founded near Delhi as a response to Hindu reconversion drives, also became a significant proselytising force in Pakistan. Its annual convention near Lahore has become one of the largest gatherings of people in the Islamic world.²⁴ Other movements also competed for prominence as the true representation of

Islamic 'reform', such as the Ahl-e Sunnat wa Jamaat, the Ahl-e Hadis, the Nadwat-ul Ulama and the *ulama* of Farangi Mahal.²⁵ The Deobandi Maulana Abul-ala Maududi remained a resolute opponent of Pakistan, but then migrated there and established the Jamaat-i-Islami, which had its own political ethos in the new country.²⁶

Several other movements and organisations of South Asian Muslims, though not theocratic, still sought inspiration in Islamic legitimacy. The Khaksars were an effort to create a Muslim self-defence paramilitary force.²⁷ The Khilafat movement focused the minds of Muslims on pan-Islamic ideals, but it remained elitist and was doomed when Turkey itself rejected the Ottoman legacy.²⁸ The Majlis-i-Ahrar was a movement based in Punjab, focusing on social issues but with a strong emphasis on religious symbolism and values. Its more middle-class and populist orientation enabled it to champion Muslim nationalism, in a polity dominated by pro-British politicians expected to remain averse to such a cause.²⁹ The Shahidganj agitation, over a mosque site disputed with Sikhs, also spread considerable communal sentiment in the future Pakistan area in the 1930s.³⁰ Moreover, with the opportunities for political representation provided by the British, religious identity had competed with secular notions in defining the basis for political activity. The issue of separate electorates on a religious basis had emerged at the very beginnings of electoral representation, starting with local bodies in the late nineteenth century.³¹ Religious cleavages continued to beset politics, and indeed intensified, as representation was extended to the provincial and, after 1935, to the central legislatures. These fissures finally proved strong enough to result in a bifurcation of the British *raj* along religious lines at independence.

While Islam was the driving force in its creation, and its population is predominantly Muslim, Pakistan still retains a pluralistic sectarian complexion. Sunni Muslims are the preponderant sect but are themselves divided into various theological factions, such as the aforementioned Deobandis, Barelvis and others. These divisions are dogmatic rather than ecclesiastical, given the weak institutional basis of clergy in Islam. Additionally, around 20 per cent of Pakistanis are said to be Shias, though this may be an over-estimation. These include followers of the Aga Khan, among some business groups in the south, but with a major concentration in the northern areas, where the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme has proved to be a model community development project on an extensive scale.³² Over time the Sunni-Shia cleavage has not escaped politicisation, which has led on to recurring incidents of sectarian violence.³³ The Ahmadiyya, or Qadiani, movement, started by Mirza Ghulam Ahmed of Qadian, has also created much dissension over the years, especially on the question of the final *nabuwat*, or prophethood. The more aggressive proselytising approach of the Qadianis, and their concentration among more educated elements, has stirred controversy among *ulama*.³⁴ Then there are some regional religious sects, such as the Zikris of Baluchistan. Lacking the social

and economic prominence of the Aga Khan's followers, the Zikris have been castigated as virtual heretics by more puritanical elements and have suffered periodic oppression.³⁵

Given the interpretative and sectarian fractions within the Muslim community in Pakistan, there has been a failure of consensus over both the parameters and practical workings of an Islamic state or system. This lack of agreement, even over specific issues such as definitions of shariah law, has resulted in retarding the pace of Islamisation. This in turn has tended to weaken the legitimacy of demands for an Islamic state. Social traditions have also posed a formidable obstacle to conformity with Islamic codes. The British had accepted customary and tribal laws in such matters as inheritance, and they had, in practice, allowed much of civil dispute, conflict resolution and even criminal justice to be handled through traditional mechanisms. These have often stood contrary to both the secular law and Islamic injunctions in Pakistan. Though mostly not formalised, they have in practice been retained, in the face of administrative and judicial inefficiencies in upholding the civil and penal code. Thus, the *Pashtun wali*, or honour code, could take precedence over national or religious laws in Pathan perceptions. Other tribal and caste injunctions are extant within Pakistan's complex social stratification, defying efforts at juridical standardisation.³⁶

At an even deeper level, the embedded pluralism of the caste system creates formidable barriers to achieving civic fraternity, either through Islam or modernism. Caste remains integral to social identity at all levels of Pakistan's class structure, regardless of sublimations and verbalised refutations by both clerics and intelligentsia. South Asian Muslims follow as avidly as Hindus and others the subscription to elite caste status with upward mobility. Hence, for example, the overflow of caste Syeds, claiming descent from the prophet Muhammad and constructing the structural parallel to the 'Aryan' origin myth of Brahmins. There is an almost equal repugnance towards 'untouchables', despite conversions to Christianity. Arguably, even the name Pakistan, or 'land of the pure', embodies the fundamental caste dichotomies between the clean and unclean. Claimants to Islamic legitimacy have generally abjured a reformist approach to this pervasive interpenetration of traditional identities, just as the failing efforts of modernists are reflected in the absence of any sustained critique of such mentalities in Pakistani society.

Adding further complexity to an already pluralistic social composition are other divides that have deterred cohesion. One prominent fault line is the extant provincial structure, which has continued from colonial times. Even keeping the discussion away from the erstwhile East Pakistan (independent Bangladesh since 1971), and the fact that Hindus and Sikhs out-migrated in 1947, Pakistan is still not a homogenous society. The country is divided into four provinces, each with a distinct identity and major language. This has reinforced the notion of 'ethnic' and 'cultural' difference. The amalgamation of these provinces into a single administrative unit,

called West Pakistan, under the Ayub Khan military regime, proved to be unsustainable. Not only were the four provinces restored after Ayub's downfall, but they have also survived without any further adjustment, despite population growth, greater urbanisation and an increasingly complex public management environment.³⁷ The greater the perceived threats from pluralism, the more expeditious were the appeals to Islam as a unifying and stabilising force. These were, however, bound to have diminishing returns, given continued economic and political deprivations.

While religion was repeatedly verbalised as integral to the affairs of Pakistan, the actual role and significance of religious politics lacked such centrality. At least in the domain of electoral politics, for over five decades religious parties remained marginalised. One of the most prominent religious ideologues has been Maulana Abul-ala Maududi. Though an erstwhile opponent of Pakistan, in keeping with Deobandi objections to the nation-state, Maududi opted for migration from India. After 1947 he began to assert that Pakistan should become an Islamic state, and he turned the Jamaat-i-Islami into a political organisation directed at achieving this goal.³⁸ The party obtained support from the USA, which wanted to use religious particularism as a buffer against communism. Locally, it did find an incipient clientele in urban centres of Sindh, especially among the concentrations of middle-class migrants from India. These groups, as a more advanced minority, could use religious politics as a counter to the power base of the landed oligarchy of Sindh, which dominated the rural majority. The few seats that religious organisations like the Jamaat-i-Islami won in elections till the 1990s came from these cities. Even this constituency was eroded with the rise of the ethnic politics of the Muhajir Qaumi Movement, or MQM (later renamed Muttahida Qaumi Mahaz).³⁹

Despite a weak electoral base, or perhaps because of it, religious politicians continued a vigorous advocacy of Islamic legitimisation. In practical terms, they appeared unable to arrive at a shared understanding of an Islamic system, beyond a rejection of the allegedly Western notion of the separation of state and religion. The ubiquitous cry of 'Islam in danger' did appear disingenuous, in a population that was predominantly and devotedly Muslim. Nonetheless, the Jamaat-i-Islami and other religious organisations, such as the Jamiat-i-Ulema-i-Islam and the Jamiat-i-Ulema-i-Pakistan, continued to stigmatise religious minorities, women and modernists.⁴⁰ Yet, they failed to gain popular support, or to make any perceptible headway against the secular traditionalists who actually dominated Pakistan's authoritarian power structure. The remarkable record of electoral failure of these organisations, however, failed to rectify perceptions, current particularly among foreign observers, of the prominence of 'fundamentalists' in Pakistan. Indian analysts in the past two decades proved especially avid in depicting, and even demonising, Pakistan in this manner.⁴¹ A major motive was perhaps to draw attention away from Indian military excesses against the Kashmiri population. Anomalously, the identification of Pakistan

with 'fundamentalism', when it continued to have minimal electoral representation, coincided with a period when Hindu religious extremists actually held power in India, and actively pursued Hindutva objectives.

If not through democracy and the expression of public preference, then why and how did Islamist segments appear to achieve such prominence in Pakistan? There can be two broad but interrelated explanations for this phenomenon, and each of these involve questions both of the legitimacy of the Pakistani state and of the legitimisation of Islam in politics. The first factor is the 'ruling establishment' thesis and authoritarian efforts to retain power through the exclusion of democracy. The second factor is the 'neo-colonial imperatives' thesis, and the role of the Western axis in using religious extremism, first as a counter to socialism/communism, and then as a *causis belli* for armed intervention in the region. This could be seen as part of an emerging pattern of aggression and genocide that Muslim populations have suffered internationally. Let us see how these factors have unfolded over the past half century in Pakistan.

The 'ruling establishment' in Pakistan largely continued through into the new country from colonial times. It comprised the upper hierarchies of the military and civil bureaucracy, agrarian magnate groups and, more marginally, an emergent large business segment. Unlike the other three groups, the landlords did need electoral authentication, to represent their upper peasant support base and to help resolve factional struggles. Even authoritarian rule in Pakistan, spearheaded by the military-bureaucratic element, had thus to resort to the electoral option, not necessarily based on adult franchise or fair polling practice, to accommodate this tier in the power structure. The singularly retarded nature of nationalist politics proved to be a precursor to subsequent strategies of the ruling establishment to curtail democratic activity. In not less than half of its history, Pakistan has experienced direct military rule. Even during periods of civilian administration, institutional and non-elected interests continued to exercise influence, if not control. This has raised serious questions of state legitimacy, leading in 1971 to the break-up of the country, with the formation of Bangladesh; and resurfacing subsequently with the continuity of authoritarian structures.

From its first decade, politics in Pakistan were characterised by confusion and uncertainty. There was an absence of elections, accompanied by a weakness of political organisations, factional manoeuvrings among politicians and the dismissal of successive governments.⁴² Finally, the coup in 1958, led by General Ayub Khan, resulted in a military dictatorship over the next decade. Thus, the religious rationale for creating Pakistan was not followed up by empowerment to an enfranchised population, which could have brought equity and legitimacy to the political system. In India, by contrast, the Indian National Congress, building on its substantive anti-colonial and nationalist credentials, was able to stabilise the political system in a democratic mode and also ward off any authoritarian incursions. In

Pakistan, in the absence of democracy, Islam continued to be used as a rationale for the nation's existence and survival. An early example was the reference to Islam in the so-called Objectives Resolution, passed by the Constituent Assembly in 1949.⁴³ Even Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the leading Muslim nationalist statesman, had frequently employed religious rhetoric, though he remained strictly secular in his political approach, personal life-style and vision of Pakistan.

With a secular ruling elite, a clear distinction had to be maintained between the use of religion as the rhetoric of power and a prominent role for religious politics itself. The elite was as averse as the colonial authorities to incorporating religious clerics into the power structure. Islamic ideologues, like Maududi, were already aspiring to a theocratic state, to be governed by a religious leader exerting supreme authority over state institutions and civil society. The secular leadership neither wished to accede to such demands, nor could they afford to give the *ulama* an opportunity for mass mobilisation. Caught in this dilemma, the elite still needed constant reference to Islam as a binding force, to try and achieve cohesion, if not integration, in a highly pluralistic society. In turn, this rhetoric encouraged religious ideologues and parties to entertain political aspirations, and a legitimising self-image, well beyond the realities of their actual support base. Insecure for having aborted democracy, the elite then had to suffer these pretensions to authority. Whenever they were tested in elections, though, the religious parties were unable to break the landlord and rich peasant nexus in rural Pakistan, where the majority of the population and electoral constituencies were situated. In the cities, too, they could manage only the odd individual success.⁴⁴

Because of questionable popular support, the *ulama* seemed to sense a greater opportunity in agitational politics. As early as 1948 they demanded the establishment of a ministry of religious affairs, to regulate and promote religious institutions and to monitor bureaucratic decision-making. The first major confrontation occurred in 1952 with the anti-Qadiani controversy. Maududi and the Jamaat-e Islami were prominent in fomenting riots and disturbances in some cities.⁴⁵ The demand to declare the Qadianis as non-Muslims, and, hence, a religious minority, was actually fulfilled much later by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, in trying to placate religious sentiment in his waning months. Qadianis were barred from holding the highest offices of the state, and official forms, as for obtaining passports and identity cards, contained disclaimers of Qadiani status.⁴⁶ Marriages of Muslims with Qadianis became more difficult than with those of other faiths, since Qadianis believed they were Muslims and, therefore, conversion at marriage, a requirement for non-believers, was untenable. Along with the occasional success, won mostly through agitational methods and aggressive advocacy, the *ulama* also suffered significant reverses. They were unable to have the shariah imposed as the single law of the land. Nor could they prevent the retention of the existing secular legal structure, such as the

common law and penal code introduced by the British. In particular, and with reference to their nemesis of the status of women, they were unable to successfully oppose the adoption of the Family Laws Ordinance under Ayub Khan, giving women more rights in matters of divorce and polygamy.⁴⁷

The modernists could criticise the Islamists for particularism and the almost ridiculous impracticality of their repudiation of modern life. Yet, the elite itself was vulnerable from its lack of delivery in the social and economic spheres. Grossly inadequate social-sector expenditures, as on health, education, sanitation and communications, reflected a continuing lack of resource allocation for the urban and rural poor. Pakistan had some of the worst social development indicators internationally, although a neighbouring democracy like India was in most matters doing no better.⁴⁸ Land-reform measures remained nominal and symbolic, with no structural redistribution of landholding towards smaller owners. Economic and industrialisation strategies, especially during the Ayub Khan regime, were viewed as accommodating large-scale enterprise. They resulted in greater wealth concentration and regional imbalances, further eroding state legitimacy. The range of supportive policies and economic concessions, that expedited the emergence of a big business segment, might well have been advantageous for Pakistan's longer-term economic positioning, but their seeming inequity was much resented by both the masses and upper rural hierarchy, as well as smaller business.⁴⁹

Closely aligned to the lack of legitimacy of an undemocratic and authoritarian system was the support it received from the USA, and the military alliances into which it took the country. Foreign assistance and economic advisors quickly followed the coup of 1958. American analysts lauded the economic goals of the Ayub regime, the political stability it appeared to have brought and even the 'basic democracy' system of a concocted electoral college. Though initially preferring non-alignment, Pakistan was manoeuvred by its army leadership into joining both the regional military alliances of CENTO and SEATO.⁵⁰ The military's continuing mercenary status from colonial times was now reconfirmed, though within an assumption of sovereignty and independence. As a bulwark against Communism, the USA also overtly supported the religious parties, especially the Jamaat-i-Islami. These were portrayed as a benign influence. With Communism as the main enemy, the attitude towards Islam as an ally was reflected in sympathetic Western scholarship on theologians and religious orders.⁵¹ Later, in the post-Communist thrust for a 'clash of civilisations', Islam as the new adversary needed to be imagined as irrational and given to 'terrorism' and 'fundamentalism'.⁵²

Despite Western economic and military assistance, it is doubtful if Pakistan was a net gainer. The strategies of untrammelled capitalism and 'functional inequality' proved unpopular. These entailed not only economic resource transfers between classes and regions but also suppression of the rights of

labour and subtenants. There were clear costs, not least in incurring another superpower's antagonism, in an undemocratic elite's strategy of leading the country away from neutrality. Adding to fears of a Soviet–Indian axis were tensions in the unequal relationship with the USA. The ambiguous position of the USA towards India, its hostility towards China, involvement with Zionism, and a less supportive Democratic administration after 1960, left Pakistan as a disenchanted ally.⁵³ Ayub's inappropriately titled autobiography, *Friends not Masters*, hardly reflected the terminology of vassalage.⁵⁴ He tried to stave off growing internal demands for democracy by maintaining belligerence towards India and eventually going to war with it in 1965. Ayub finally succumbed to a popular agitation in 1969, a transition that was to reveal deeper contradictions.

The reversal of the strategies of the 1960s was brought about by an opposition movement based on economic and social reforms rather than any religious symbols or ideology. The belated experiment with democracy in 1970, with Pakistan's first free general elections, confirmed that religious parties continued to lack a popular political base. In East Pakistan, the Bengali nationalist upsurge did not come from religious politics. Ethnicity rather than religion was the mobilising force for conflict, in the ensuing civil war and creation of Bangladesh.⁵⁵ In West Pakistan, electoral victory went to Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), which had a socialistic message resented by religious groups. The secular context was repeated later in the armed movement in Baluchistan, which Bhutto tried to suppress through army action.⁵⁶ Similarly, only one religious party, the Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam, could muster some presence in the politics of the Frontier province. Not long after Bhutto's fall, both regions were to be strongly equated with 'Islamic fundamentalism'. Yet there was hardly a semblance of this even a few years earlier.

The strategic alliance put together by Bhutto was also non-religious in orientation. It comprised diverse elements with distinct agendas but was aimed essentially against the rapidly growing big business interests.⁵⁷ The landlords of Sindh chafed against the acquisitiveness of the Karachi-based industrial and mercantile nouveau riche. The upper peasantry of Punjab resented tenant expropriation and the passing of 'green revolution' benefits to larger farmers. Small and medium enterprises were alienated by the passing of incentives and subsidies to larger-scale businesses. The urban intelligentsia was riling from the loss of political and human rights under military rule. Finally, despite increasing labour opportunities, the rural and urban poor were severely squeezed by stagnant real wages and controls over unions. These constituencies were addressed by Bhutto's administration through a sweeping nationalisation of large-scale industry and attempts at social and economic reforms.⁵⁸ Soon, however, state policy began leaning towards rural landed anti-market interests, by bringing large sections of agricultural trade and intermediate agro-processing into the

public sector. Bhutto also moved away from the PPP's socialist and populist elements and towards the traditional elite.⁵⁹

Despite frequent references to Islam, and his convening of the Islamic summit in 1973, Bhutto remained firmly anchored in secular politics. With his hold on power unravelling, Bhutto did take measures to appeal to religious sensitivities, though these failed to save either him or democracy from the ubiquitous return to military rule. Once adopted, decisions like alcohol prohibition and declaring of Qadianis as non-Muslims proved difficult to reverse. These concessions occurred with the PPP's move to the Right, a return to landlord-oriented politics and Bhutto's own undemocratic and authoritarian mien, climaxing in the allegations of sustained vote rigging in the 1977 elections. Possibly, the elite had again proved incapable of maintaining institutional democracy and sustained economic growth. One price was the appeasement of religious sentiment. The *ulama* continued to advocate religious traditionalism against the perceived threat of a modernising secular elite, whose reformist agenda was again seen to be placing Islam 'in danger'. With discourse focusing on a castigation of the 'other', the approach became one of condemning, and agitating to have banned, various practices and activities that were diagnosed as contrary to Islam, in the social, cultural and economic spheres.⁶⁰

The avid support of such an 'Islamisation' programme by Zia-ul-Haq's military regime was arguably not rooted in domestic needs and sensibilities but in an emerging international scenario. It emanated more from the second factor in our analysis, the role of geopolitical concerns and superpower rivalries. That Bhutto's memory has survived as an electoral legacy could be a function both of the promise of reform that he held out to the people, and of the lack of legitimacy of Zia's usurpation of power. Under Zia, state patronage and sponsorship of an 'Islamic society' could not be related to any major indigenous political pressures. Ayub Khan had talked of Islamic modernism and Bhutto of Islamic socialism, but both were dismissive of a more intrusive role for religion. Even during the political confusions of the 1950s, the authoritarian over-riding of democracy of the 1960s, the dire crisis with the break up of Pakistan after 1971 and the troubled economic conditions of the 1970s, there was neither the popular will nor a state impulse towards a theocratic society. Perhaps Zia's dictatorial transgressions, and the ruling establishment's authoritarian proclivities, were severe enough to merit such an extreme position. However, it is highly unlikely that Islam was a necessary prerequisite for Zia's survival as a military dictator or that there were compelling internal requirements for adopting a theocratic option.⁶¹

The real stimulus for the rise of militant Islam, or 'Islamic fundamentalism' according to current usage, appears to be international geo-political and neo-colonial imperatives. When US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger threatened that Pakistan would become 'a horrible example', he was most probably not referring to the country's nuclear aspirations, as most Pakistanis like to believe. Rather, he was alluding to Bhutto's non-compliance

with the grand strategy of drawing the Soviet Union into a conflict in Afghanistan, thereby draining it of its already strained economic resources. The destabilisation of Afghanistan's neutrality, which had underpinned the 'great game' understanding between the British and Russian empires, was a necessary prelude. Threats to Afghanistan's socialistic regime finally induced the Soviets to invade in 1979, an action that proved fatal for the Soviet empire. The prerequisite of a cooperative regime in place for conducting anti-Soviet operations was provided by the Zia coup of 1977. To generate an 'Islamic resistance' to the Soviet occupation, guerrilla training bases of *mujahideen*, or 'holy warriors', were established in Pakistan. Sizeable US financial and military assistance began flowing in. A rapidly expanding network emerged of *madrasas*, or religious seminaries, where extremist *ulama*, many of Deobandi and Wahhabi origin, could preach jihad and recruits could get terrorist training.⁶²

In the effort to turn the domestic front into a conducive base for the Afghan offensive, Zia's military regime was made to follow certain strategies. First, Zia tried strenuously to impose an Islamic diktat, and turn the country into a theocratic society. That this was more an ancillary to the Afghan 'jihad', and not a deeply held national objective, was reflected in the partial and selective application of religious precepts. Critics have indeed termed these efforts a cynical attempt at manipulating Islam to serve military and US interests. Nevertheless, the state's new stance did introduce a level of intolerance and particularism, to which Pakistan's syncretistic cultural and religious traditions were unfamiliar. Provided with a new and facilitative public arena, religious cadres engaged in aggressive advocacy and were allowed to penetrate, if not dominate, media and educational institutions. The Islami Jamiat-i-Tulaba, the student wing of the Jamaat-i-Islami, was especially active in harassing progressive academics and students and in imposing an environment of illiberality on college and university campuses. The media was saturated with religious content, while even school textbooks were reformulated to make them adhere to 'Islamic ideology'. Attempts were made to discourage, and even actively constrain, a wide range of social observances, from kite-flying to musical entertainment. Yet, such fanatical strictures were only accepted under duress, since they remained without popular sanction.⁶³

Despite a voluminous output of aspirations and recipes by ideologues, no clear definition emerged on what constituted an Islamic state, system or society. The Shias rejected the central precept of the payment of *zakat*.⁶⁴ The Sunni orders, such as the Barelvis and Deobandis, also retained their interpretative differences. Nor were caste or ethnic identities diluted by Islam's universalistic values. Indeed, with the marginalisation of the modernisers, primordial loyalties were bound to re-emerge. In higher-education institutions, for example, along with the religious overlay, there also flourished student caste organisations and faculty caste alignments.⁶⁵ The state did adopt measures like the Hudood and blasphemy laws, which created greater insecurity among women, minorities and dissidents and sanctioned more

draconian punishment.⁶⁶ Another damaging outcome was the proliferation of armed militant groups, including citizens from other Muslim countries and the unchecked dispersion of arms inside Pakistan. An underground drug economy emerged, deeply enmeshed in the Afghan resistance but with a critical impact on Pakistan's capability for crime prevention. Even more serious was the relapse in family-planning programmes, leading to a rapidly expanding population that grew almost fivefold, from 35 million in 1947 to the current level of over 150 million.⁶⁷ Zia's legacy was the country's continued association with religious extremism. Through the 1990s this proved highly counter-productive for its image, as a congenial environment for foreign investment or even tourism, and as a credible possessor of nuclear weapons.

A related strategy to maintain the Afghan war effort was the suppression of democracy. Zia blatantly stated that Islam and democracy were incompatible, leaving people bemused whether such notions were made in Heaven or in Washington. Corporeal and even capital punishment was meted out to political opponents. The emphasis on public flogging recalled the more macabre elements of Foucault's treatise on discipline and punishment.⁶⁸ Again, the violation of human and political rights coincided with a new intensity in Western economic and military support. In an effort to incorporate elite civilian support, Zia first put together a nominated assembly and then held non-party elections. This process brought in a host of intermediaries that had to be placated from public funds. Events showed that such 'politicians' were more involved with resource gratification and loan fraud than with seeking the legitimacy of legislative process. Through the 1990s they retained a vested interest in political deinstitutionalisation, and many remained involved with the criminal activities on which they could thrive, in a land of relapsed accountability.⁶⁹

A further strategy, continuing into the period of civilian administrations in the 1990s, also related to the mollification of intermediaries and elite stakeholders. This occurred through various stratagems, such as an increase in public service corruption, a weakening of transparency and an incapacitation of the judiciary. Concessionary loans for beneficiary investors were correlated with a toleration of 'creative' bankruptcies. The slow progress on privatisation maintained public-sector rents, though this process gathered pace in the 1990s. Widespread tax evasion was accompanied by an inability to expand the revenue base. The unwillingness to curtail state expenditure led to enhanced fiscal deficits. A growing and unsustainable international debt created problems of loan repayments, taking the country by 2000 to the brink of sovereign default. Multilateral money lending institutions, like the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, began demanding stronger extractive measures to facilitate debt repayments and placed stricter conditionalities on further loans. The foreign debt levels of over 30 billion US dollars were said to correspond roughly with the amount held by Pakistanis in overseas bank accounts. The imposition of indirect taxes, and enhanced charges for utilities, was an attempt to transfer fiscal burdens

from the elite to the general population. Poverty levels increased in the 1990s, while the economic growth rate fell under 5 per cent. Structural adjustment and institutional reform appeared problematical in the face of incumbency interests. The practical face of induced Islamism, Western interference and elite under-performance appeared to be a functional anarchy, one exacerbated by a relentless growth in population and an unravelling of governance and public management.⁷⁰

It was such conditions that took an ill-prepared country into the next phase of its eventful history, to the centre of a renewed interplay between imperialism, its victims and its accessories. To this there were regional and international dimensions.⁷¹ In the regional domain, the sudden loss of interest by the West, with the break-up of the Soviet Union, left Pakistan to cope with the legacy of the Afghan conflict. The ongoing civil war in Afghanistan prevented Pakistan from gaining the economic dividends of access to central Asia. It also entailed a prolongation of the burden of maintaining over 3 million refugees.⁷² Pakistan's military patronage and the outflow from the *madrasas* helped in the victory of the Taliban, but this also proved incomplete, with Iran, Russia and India supporting non-Pash-tun ethnic resistance. The religious extremist option failed to be sustainable. The Taliban were internationally reviled for their strict interpretation of religious codes. Pakistan was also stigmatised for its support for them. Their hosting of 'international terrorism', and a purported role in the 9/11 attacks in the USA, eventually brought about their downfall. It remains to be seen whether the Taliban saga has served as a negative example for religious organisations as claimants to power in Pakistan.⁷³

Despite the advantages they enjoyed under military rule and Western sponsorship in the 1980s, Islamist parties could not gain further ground in the democratic domain in the 1990s. Some of the major religious parties were taken on as titular partners by the Muslim League under Nawaz Sharif, a politician promoted by the Zia regime. The resulting Islamic Democratic Alliance (or IJI) fell away by the mid-1990s, as the Muslim League veered towards economic reforms and big business interests, while the religious parties counted on smaller business for support. They voiced opposition to market oriented policies and debt conditionalities and also criticised the Shariah Bill, passed by the Sharif Government in 1990, as being inadequate. However, they remained marginalised in electoral politics, despite an environment of political instability and the exposure of civilian politicians for rampant corruption. The successive dismissals of the governments of Nawaz Sharif and the PPP, under Benazir Bhutto, failed to generate an autonomous and successful upsurge by Islamists, or to improve their electoral prospects.

Again, in the absence of electoral success, religious politics turned to confrontational activity. Beyond the larger parties, new organisations and splinter groups were created, such as the Tehrik-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Muhammadi, which agitated for the enforcement of shariah, and the terroristic Harkat-ul Ansar and Jaish-e-Muhammad. Some militant groups

also thrived on *jihadi* campaigns in Kashmir, and beyond. They had shared origins with earlier outfits trained for the Afghan war, if only because of a common patron in the Pakistan military's Inter-Services Intelligence.⁷⁴ Recruitment in the 1990s spread to rural areas, from among the multitudes of unemployed youth and the continued output of *madrasa* education. Some extremists also sought an outlet in Shia-Sunni sectarian violence, to some extent as surrogates for Saudi Arabian and Iranian rivalries. The main sectarian body among Shias was the Tehrik-e-Nifaz-e-Fiqh-e-Jafariya, later renamed the Tehrik-e-Jafariya Pakistan, whose more militant offshoot was the Sipah-e-Muhammad Pakistan. The main Sunni organisation was the Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan, and its more militant wing the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi.⁷⁵

Apart from mainly spawning militant organisations, religious politics initially fared little better in the return to authoritarianism. With growing Western distaste for them, they could count on only clandestine succour from General Pervez Musharraf's regime, which had commenced in 1999 the latest chapter of military assumption of power. Overt state support withered after 9/11. The post-9/11 Western invasion of Afghanistan could have serious implications for the articulation of power in Pakistan. The strong showing in the 2002 elections of the Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal (MMA), or coalition of religious parties, in the Frontier province neighbouring Afghanistan, was an unprecedented advance for the religious segment in Pakistan's electoral history. This belated success could be partly attributed to the military's continuing manipulation of the country's electoral system. As under Zia, Musharraf's efforts to marginalise the mainstream opposition parties could create an extended space for religious politicians. More dangerously, the 2002 MMA gains could be a popular response to the Western aggression in Afghanistan, a sentiment further aggravated by the 2003 Iraq war. The collapsing credibility of the Anglo-American axis could also erode domestic acceptance of Pervez Musharraf, who could more persuasively be seen as a client autocrat, bent on turning the country yet again into a logistical base for imperialist aggression. That both the military coups of Zia and Musharraf occurred a couple of years prior to the outbreak of war in Afghanistan had already stretched the realms of coincidence, and had begun to border on the sinister.

Therefore, Islam in politics was clearly unable to make significant popular headway till the recent past. However, in the future it is not impossible that the balance of moral authority could shift towards it, giving it a more irresistible claim to power. By turning into a potent force of opposition, Islamism could begin to increasingly determine the contours of power and legitimacy in Pakistan. By getting closer to the nodes of governance, religious extremism could also be used in a friendless world as an excuse for foreign aggression, or even for dismantling the Pakistani state. Each spate of military rule has had disastrous consequences for Pakistan: the splitting of the country in 1971, and the crises of governance and economy after

Zia. The Pakistani people can only hope that the legacy of Musharraf will not be greater disunity or a further rise of religious extremism.

Again, it might not be local exigencies but international factors that can more powerfully legitimise Islamist politics. These forces could also severely affect the standing of the secular and modernist element, which could itself either become fundamentally alienated from the West, or be marginalised for its submission to an imperialist agenda. The international suffering of Muslim populations, and the huge numbers of casualties inflicted on Muslims, which could now be regarded as a holocaust, could make religion a rallying cry for justice, if not revenge. This sentiment can count on a long list of transgressions against Muslims in the past half-century. These can be catalogued with telling effect: the destruction of Palestine and the continued dehumanisation of the Palestinian people; the million or so Afghans killed in the war with the Soviets and the tens of thousands through American bombing; the millions dead from a Western-incited Iraqi war against Iran; the million or so Iraqi dead from the 1991 war and subsequent sanctions; over 500,000 Iraqis killed since the 2003 invasion, and yet no action against perceived war criminals for perpetrating an illegitimate aggression; and heavy mortality in the Balkans, Chechnya and Kashmir, as well as in Algeria with the overturning of democracy at the prospects of an Islamist electoral victory. The Muslim holocaust can provide those who espouse religious politics with moral stature and justifiable rectitude, especially when they find that these are tales that cannot be told, for this murderous assault is accompanied by the eerie but not unconscious silence of the wolves.

Notes

- 1 See D. Maclean, *Religion and Society in Arab Sind*, Leiden: Brill, 1989, Chapter 1–2.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 B. Metcalf, *Islamic Contestations: Essays on Muslims in India and Pakistan*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004, p. 201. See also Chapter 8 for the discussion of the overuse of ‘Muslim’ and ‘Islamic’ categories by more contemporary writers.
- 4 See A. Wink, *Al-Hind, The Making of the Indo-Islamic World: The Slave Kings and the Islamic Conquest, 11th–13th Centuries*, Leiden: Brill, 1999, Vol. II.
- 5 Tapan Raychaudhuri and Irfan Habib (eds), *Cambridge Economic History of India*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982, Vol. I. See also Annemarie Schimmel, *Islam in the Indian Subcontinent*, Leiden: Brill, 1980.
- 6 For the Mughal Empire, see J. Richards, *The Mughal Empire*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993; Irfan Habib (ed.), *Akbar and his India*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997; and Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam (eds), *The Mughal State, 1526–1750*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- 7 For the causes and process of the decline of the Mughal Empire, see Irfan Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India*, Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1963; and Muzaffar Alam, *The Crisis of Empire in Mughal North India: Awadh and Punjab, 1707–48*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1986.
- 8 For the resulting buoyancy of Punjabi peasant society, see T. Kessinger, *Vilyatpur, 1848–1968: Social and Economic Change in a North Indian Village*, Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1974; and Imran Ali, ‘Canal Colonization

- and Socio-Economic Change', in Indu Banga (ed.), *Five Punjabi Centuries: Polity, Economy, Society and Culture, c. 1500–1990*, Delhi: Manohar, 1997. For conditions in the Frontier province, see R. Nichols, *Settling the Frontier: Land, Law and Society in the Peshawar Valley, 1500–1900*, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- 9 See Imran Ali, *The Punjab under Imperialism, 1885–1947*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988; and Imran Ali, 'The Punjab Canal Colonies, 1885–1940', Ph.D. thesis, Australian National University, 1980.
 - 10 The impact of the close involvement of the Pakistan region in the British Empire's military history is assessed in D.A. Low, 'Pakistan and India: Political Legacies from the Colonial Past,' *South Asia*, August 2002, Vol. 25, No. 2, pp. 257–72. See also the chapters by C. Dewey and A. Major in D.A. Low (ed.), *The Political Inheritance of Pakistan*, London: Macmillan, 1991; and Tan Tai Yong, *The Garrison State: The Military, Government and Society in Colonial Punjab, 1849–1947*, Delhi: Sage, 2005.
 - 11 See Imran Ali, 'Malign Growth: Agricultural Colonization and the Roots of Backwardness in the Punjab', *Past and Present*, No. 114, February 1987, pp. 110–32.
 - 12 On the Congress and Indian nationalism there is now an extensive literature. See, for example, D.A. Low (ed.), *The Congress and the Raj*, New York: Heinemann, 1977.
 - 13 See Imran Ali, *Punjab Politics in the Decade before Partition*, Lahore: South Asian Institute, University of the Punjab, 1975; and 'Relations between the Muslim League and the Panjab National Unionist Party, 1935–47,' *South Asia*, 1976, No. 6, pp. 51–65.
 - 14 See the chapters on Sind and Frontier in Low, *The Political Inheritance of Pakistan*. See also, S.A. Rittenberg, *Ethnicity, Nationalism and Pakhtuns: The Independence Movement in India's North-West Frontier Province, 1901–1947*, Durham, N.C.: Carolina Academic Press, 1988; and Syed W.A. Shah, *Ethnicity, Islam and Nationalism: Muslim Politics in the North-West Frontier Province, 1937–1947*, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1999.
 - 15 See Imran Ali, 'The Punjab and the Retardation of Nationalism' in Low, *The Political Inheritance of Pakistan*, pp. 29–52.
 - 16 A dramatic example of this was the rise of militant Sikhism in eighteenth-century Punjab, as a coalescing force for a rebellious peasantry that contributed significantly to Mughal decline. See W.H. McLeod, *The Evolution of the Sikh Community*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976; and Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1966, 2 vols.
 - 17 A substantial literature now exists on movements and schools of thought in South Asian Islam. Some of these works are: P. Hardy, *The Muslims of British India*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972; B. Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: The Deoband, 1860–1900*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1982; Metcalf, *Islamic Contestations*; F. Robinson, *Islam and Muslim History in South Asia*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000; and W. Smith, *Modern Islam in India*, Lahore: Shaikh Muhammad Ashraf, 1969.
 - 18 See S. Ansari, *Sufi Saints and State Power: The Pirs of Sind, 1842–1947*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992; and David Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam: Punjab and the Making of Pakistan*, Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1988.
 - 19 These strategies could cut across communal divides. One of the largest canal land grants in Punjab, of 7,800 acres, was made to a descendant of the founder of the Sikh faith, with the expectation of adding the weight of spiritual power to political support. This was a grant made in the Sohag Para Canal Colony to Baba Sir Khem Singh Bedi and his family. See Imran Ali, *The Punjab under Imperialism*, p. 73.
 - 20 For the historical role of Sufis and shrines in two regions of South Asia, see R. Eaton, *The Sufis of Bijapur*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1978;

- and R. Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier, 1204–1760*, Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1993. See also Christian W. Troll (ed.), *Muslim Shrines in India: Their Character, History and Significance*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989; and S.A.A. Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1983, 2 vols.
- 21 See Imran Ali, *The Punjab under Imperialism*. After 1947, members of *pir* families have continued to be prominent in electoral politics, as well as holding public positions under military rule. ‘Secular’ politicians too have continued to pay obeisance at shrines. Both Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif, and other party leaders, as well as generals acting as ministers and governors under martial law, have publicly advertised their visits to shrines for worship and the ritual laying of *chaddars* over the graves of *pirs*.
- 22 See Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India*; and Usha Sanyal, *Devotional Islam and Politics in British India: Ahmad Riza Khan Bareilly and his Movement, 1870–1920*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- 23 See Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam*, Chapter 2.
- 24 On the Tableeghi Jamaat, see M. Anwarul Haq, *The Faith Movement of Mawlana Muhammad Ilyas*, London: Allen & Unwin, 1972; and Metcalf, *Islamic Contestations*, Chapter 7 and 11.
- 25 See the works of Barbara Metcalf, Francis Robinson and Usha Sanyal among others.
- 26 For studies on Muslim thinkers, see Aziz Ahmed, *An Intellectual History of Islam in India*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1969; Christian Troll, *Sayyid Ahmad Khan: A Reinterpretation of Muslim Theology*, Delhi: Vikas, 1979; and Aziz Ahmad and G.E. von Grunebaum (eds), *Muslim Self-Statement in India and Pakistan 1857–1968*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1970.
- 27 See Shan Muhammad, *Khaksar Movement in India*, Meerut: Meenakshi Prakashan, 1973.
- 28 See Gail Minault, *The Khilafat Movement: Religious Symbolism and Political Mobilization in India*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1982. It was at a meeting of the Khilafat movement in Lahore in 1929 that the demand for a separate state for Muslims in South Asia was made, by Nawab Sir Zulfikar Ali Khan of Maler Kotla in his Welcome Address to the Khilafat Conference. This was one year before the address, couched in very similar language, by the poet Muhammad Iqbal, to whom the status of the originator of the idea of Pakistan is falsely attributed, See K.K. Aziz, *A History of the Idea of Pakistan*, Lahore: Vanguard, 1987, 2 vols.
- 29 On the Ahrar, see W. Smith, *Modern Islam in India*, pp. 270–5; and, for a larger work, Janbaz Mirza, *Karwan-i Ahrar*, Lahore: Maktaba Tabsarah, 1975–81, 5 vols. In the Punjab, the British regarded Muslim nationalism as a threat to the inter-communal alliance they had forged in the landlord-based Punjab National Unionist Party, in a province vital to the British Indian empire’s strategic and economic interests.
- 30 D. Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam*, pp. 99–107.
- 31 See D. Page, *Prelude to Partition*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987; and F. Robinson, *Separatism among Indian Muslims: The Politics of the United Provinces Muslims, 1860–1923*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974.
- 32 The Aga Khanis are a prominent component of the Karachi business community, own a major hotel chain (Serena Hotels) and have recently purchased Habib Bank, one of the three largest bank chains in Pakistan, under the privatisation programme. They also established Pakistan’s first private university, the Aga Khan University in Karachi, in the 1980s. Commencing with a medical faculty and hospital, the university is planning to start an ambitious School of Arts and Sciences. For AKRSP, see Mahmood H. Khan and Shoaib S. Khan, *Rural Change in the Third World*, New York: Greenwood Press, 1992.

- 33 See M. Qasim Zaman, 'Sectarianism in Pakistan: The Radicalization of Shi'i and Sunni Identities,' *Modern Asian Studies*, July 1998, Vol. 32, No. 3, pp. 689–716.
- 34 See S. Lavan, *The Ahmadiyah Movement*, Delhi: Manohar, 1974.
- 35 For the Zikris of Baluchistan, and other aspects of society and politics, see P. Titus (ed.), *Marginality and Modernity: Ethnicity and Change in Post-Colonial Balochistan*, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- 36 For an example of the formalisation of customary and tribal law and codes, see C.L. Tupper, *Punjab Customary Law*, Calcutta: Government Printing Press, 1881.
- 37 The local-government reforms, under the Pervez Musharraf Government, have attempted to strengthen district level decision-making and have abolished the supra-district but sub-provincial administrative category of 'divisions'. A more far-sighted transition might have been to retain the divisions and abolish the provinces. The Punjab, the largest province, now has over 80 million people, making it more populous than any country in Europe except Russia and united Germany. In India, the number of provinces has almost doubled since 1947, indicating greater political flexibility and pragmatism.
- 38 See Kalim Bahadur, *The Jama'at-i Islami of Pakistan*, New Delhi: Chetana Publications, 1977; Khalid Rahman et al. (eds), *Jama'at-e-Islami and National and International Politics*, Islamabad: Book Traders, 1999; and Seyyed V.R. Nasr, *The Vanguard of the Islamic Revolution: The Jama'at-i Islami of Pakistan*, Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1994, and *Mawdudi and the Making of Islamic Revivalism*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- 39 On the MQM, see Feroze Ahmed (ed.), *Ethnicity and Politics in Pakistan*, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1998; and Oskar Verkaaik, *Migrants and Militants: Fun and Urban Violence in Pakistan*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004.
- 40 The print media regularly reports such aspersions. For the major English language newspapers, see *Dawn*, *The Nation* and *The News*; and in Urdu, see *Jang* and *Nawa-e-Waqt*.
- 41 For example, D.S. Palit and P.K.S. Namboodiri, *Pakistan's Islamic Bomb*, Delhi: Vikas, 1979.
- 42 For reviews of this period, see M. Rafique Afzal, *Pakistan: History and Politics 1947–1971*, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2001; K.K. Aziz, *Party Politics in Pakistan, 1947–58*, Islamabad: National Commission on Historical and Cultural Research, 1976; K. Callard, *Pakistan: A Political Study*, London: Allen & Unwin, 1957, and *Political Forces in Pakistan, 1947–1959*, New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1959; and A. McGrath, *The Destruction of Pakistan's Democracy*, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- 43 McGrath, *The Destruction of Pakistan's Democracy*, pp. 70–5. While it acknowledged the primacy of Islam in the affairs of Pakistan, the Objectives Resolution did not imply a theocracy to rule the country, a point clarified by prime minister Liaquat Ali Khan in his speeches.
- 44 For electoral results, see I. Talbot, *Pakistan: A Modern History*, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- 45 It is noteworthy that anti-Qadiani agitation has also surfaced in Bangladesh, with growing demands for declaring Qadianis as non-Muslims.
- 46 On Qadianis see Lavan, *The Ahmadiyah Movement*. See also Yohanan Friedman, *Prophecy Continuous*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- 47 For efforts at reversing family law reforms and other modernist laws, see Rubya Mehdi, *The Islamization of the Law in Pakistan*, Richmond: Curzon Press, 1994.
- 48 See Imran Ali, 'The Historical Lineages of Poverty and Exclusion in Pakistan,' *South Asia*, August 2002, Vol. 25, No. 2, pp. 33–60.
- 49 For reviews of the Ayub Khan period, see H. Feldman, *From Crisis to Crisis: Pakistan, 1962–69*, London: Oxford University Press, 1972; Khalid B. Sayeed, *The Political System of Pakistan*, Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin Company,

- 1967; R. Wheeler, *The Politics of Pakistan*, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1970; and L. Ziring, *The Ayub Khan Era: Politics of Pakistan, 1958–1969*, Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1971.
- 50 See K. Arif (ed.), *America-Pakistan Relations*, Lahore: Vanguard, 1984; Farooq N. Bajwa, *Pakistan and the West: The First Decade 1947–1957*, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- 51 See, for example, F. Abbot, *Islam and Pakistan*, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1968; L. Binder, *Religion and Politics in Pakistan*, Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1961; and D. Smith (ed.), *South Asian Politics and Religion*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988.
- 52 For example, S. Weissman and H. Krosney, *The Islamic Bomb: The Nuclear Threat to Israel and the Middle East*, New York: Times Books, 1981.
- 53 On this relationship, see D. Kux, *The United States and Pakistan, 1947–2000: Disenchanted Allies*, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- 54 See Ayub Khan, *Friends not Masters: A Political Autobiography*, London: Oxford University Press, 1967. See also Altaf Gauhar, *Ayub Khan: Pakistan's First Military Ruler*, Lahore: Sang-e-Meel, 1993.
- 55 On the break-up of Pakistan and the creation of Bangladesh, see A. Basit, *The Breaking of Pakistan*, Lahore: Liberty Publishers, 1996; G.W. Choudhury, *The Last Days of United Pakistan*, London: Hurst, 1974; H. Feldman, *The End and the Beginning: Pakistan 1969–1971*, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1976; Syed Humayun, *Sheikh Mujib's 6-Point Formula: An Analytical Study of the Breakup of Pakistan*, Karachi: Royal Book Company, 1995; Rounaq Jahan, *Pakistan: Failure in National Integration*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1972; Safdar Mahmud, *Pakistan Divided*, Lahore: Ferozsons, 1984; and Kalim Siddiqui, *Conflict, Crisis and War in Pakistan*, London: Macmillan, 1972.
- 56 See Selig S. Harrison, *In Afghanistan's Shadow: Baluch Nationalism and Soviet Temptations*, New York: Carnegie Endowment, 1981.
- 57 See Imran Ali, 'Historical Impacts on Political Economy in Pakistan', *Asian Journal of Management Cases*, 2004, Vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 129–46.
- 58 See Shahid J. Burki, *Pakistan Under Bhutto: 1971–1977*, London: Macmillan, 1980; Rafi Raza, *Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Pakistan, 1967–1977*, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1997; Anwar H. Syed, *The Discourse and Politics of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992; and Stanley Wolpert, *Zulfi Bhutto of Pakistan: His Life and Times*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- 59 For evaluations of business, economic change and state policy, see Imran Ali, 'Business and Power in Pakistan', in A. Weiss and S. Zulfikar Gilani (eds), *Power and Civil Society in Pakistan*, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2001; and Imran Ali, 'Business, Stakeholders and Strategic Responses in Pakistan', *UNEAC Asia Papers*, No. 8, Armidale, New South Wales: University of New England Asia Centre, 2005.
- 60 Pressure from the religious right could also have originated from Western displeasure at Bhutto's neutralist stance and his convening of a summit of Islamic leaders. Like Ayub, he had written a book that was titled inappropriately for the leader of a client state: see Zulfikar A. Bhutto, *The Myth of Independence*, London: Oxford University Press, 1979.
- 61 See B. Cloughy, *A History of the Pakistan Army*, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1999; S. Cohen, *The Pakistan Military*, Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1984; and Hassan-Askari Rizvi, *The Military and Politics in Pakistan, 1947–86*, Lahore: Progressive Publishers, 1987.
- 62 See E.R. Girardet, *Afghanistan: The Soviet War*, London: Macmillan, 1985.
- 63 For a survey of the state and Islamisation under Zia and subsequent civilian governments, see Seyyed V.R. Nasr, *Islamic Leviathan*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2001, Chapter 6.

- 64 Many Sunnis signed affidavits stating Shia status, in order to avoid paying the *zakat* tax of 2.5 per cent of capital. Also, every year there would be a general run on savings accounts before the *zakat* payment date of 1st Ramadhan.
- 65 The Faisalabad Agricultural University, for example, has had an ongoing factional struggle between faculty members belonging to the Jat and Arain castes.
- 66 See A. Weiss (ed.), *Islamic Reassertion in Pakistan: The Application of Islamic Laws in a Modern State*, Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1986.
- 67 At a 3-per-cent population growth rate per year (though the Government now claims a lower rate, but with unconvincing explanations), Pakistan's population is expected by 2020 to reach 250 million, or around the existing population of the USA. Another feature of rapid growth is that well over half the population is under twenty years of age, representing a virtual demographic time bomb for future employment demand and reproductive capacity.
- 68 See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, New York: Random House, 1977.
- 69 For the Zia period, see General Khalid M. Arif, *Working with Zia: Pakistan's Power Politics, 1977–88*, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1995; C. Baxter (ed.), *Zia's Pakistan: Politics and Stability in a Frontline State*, Boulder, Col.: Westview Press, 1985; and Lt. General Faiz A. Chishti, *Betrayals of Another Kind: Islam, Democracy and the Army in Pakistan*, Cincinnati, Ohio: South Asia Books, 1990.
- 70 For economic conditions and policies in the post-Zia period, see Iqbal Akhund, *Trial and Error: The Advent and Eclipse of Benazir Bhutto*, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2000; C. Baxter and C. Kennedy (eds), *Pakistan 2000*, Karachi: Oxford University Press; Ishrat Hussain, *Pakistan: The Economy of an Elitist State*, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1999; and Ghulam Kibria, *Shattered Dream: Understanding Pakistan's Development*, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- 71 For an analysis of the multidimensional nature of issues facing Pakistan, and an analysis of the mainsprings of the Pakistani state, see Imran Ali, 'Understanding Pakistan: The Impact of Global, Regional, National and Local Interactions' and 'Past and Present: The Making of the State in Pakistan' in Imran Ali, S. Mumtaz and J.-L. Racine (eds), *Pakistan: The Contours of State and Society*, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- 72 At least here there was some recognition of Pakistan's efforts. An early July 2004 edition of *Newsweek* magazine featured cover story articles on 'the best countries in the world', according to certain criteria that represented the most crucial human values. Pakistan was one of these chosen few, as the topmost for the category 'the most hospitable country in the world.'
- 73 See P. Marsden, *The Taliban: War, Religion and the New Order in Afghanistan*, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1998; and Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*, New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2000.
- 74 For an analysis of more recent developments in Pakistan, see Imran Ali et al. (eds), *Pakistan: The Contours of State and Society*; Owen B. Jones, *Pakistan: Eye of the Storm*, New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2002; and Weiss and Gilani, *Power and Civil Society in Pakistan*.
- 75 For a discussion of these Shia and Sunni organisations, see the chapters by Anwar H. Syed and Afak Hayder in Hafeez Malik (ed.), *Pakistan: Founders Aspirations and Today's Realities*, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2001, pp. 244–86.

9 Constructions of religious authority in Indonesian Islamism

'The Way and the Community' re-imagined

R. Michael Feener

Since the formative centuries of Islamicate civilisation, 'the people of the Way and of the Community' (*ahl al-sunna wa'l-jama'a*) has been a contested category of self-definition, emerging out of broad religious and social trends among those whom Marshall Hodgson referred to as the 'Piety-minded' and deployed toward diverse directions in the communitarian polemics of *Jama'ism* during the medieval and early modern periods. The politics of groups espousing such religious orientations were complex throughout Muslim history, ranging from scripturalist opposition to Marwanid caliphal rule in the eighth century to anti-revolutionary populist reactions expressed through 'pieties of solidarity' in Abbasid Baghdad. At stake in these contentions were fundamental issues relating the definition of the *Sunna*, as well as the role of the religious leadership within turbulent urban class dynamics.¹

Energetic debates over who could legitimately lay claim to the authority vested in 'the Way and the Community' have not only persisted, but have actually increased in intensity over the past century in many parts of the Muslim world. South-East Asia has been no exception to this trend. In fact, contention over control of this label has driven some parties to exert considerable energies towards establishing definitive rights to and formal definition of this powerful symbol of legitimate Sunni Muslim authority. For example, in 1997 Indonesia's largest Muslim organisation, the 'traditionalist' *Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU) launched a formal campaign to put forward a new definition of the phrase *ahl al-sunna wa'l-jama'a*, and to reclaim the title for themselves. With the intensification of focus on the issue, there even arose the need for a new short-hand for ease of reference by Muslims engaged in these debates and thus the classical Arabic phrase *ahl al-sunna wa'l-jama'a* came to be replaced by the modern Indonesian acronym *Aswaja* in both popular and scholarly discourses.

The NU's position on *Aswaja* was most eloquently put forth in a slim volume published by one of its leading scholars, Said Agiel Siradj who defined the idea as preeminently the way of moderation (*tawassut*), characterised by the cardinal virtues of 'balance' and 'equity'. In his preface to Said Agiel's *Aswaja* booklet, then NU Chairman Abdurrahman Wahid emphasised that the importance of such an understanding of *Aswaja* is to

remind Muslims of the fact that differences of opinion within the Muslim community should be viewed as a blessing (*ikhtilaf al-umma, rahma*).² In this, it fit well the broader agendas of democracy and pluralism that Wahid was publicly promoting during the 1990s. Such developments can be seen as components of a constellation of complex changes in understandings of Islamic law and society in modern Indonesia; starting from the introduction of radical calls for a new kind of *ijtihad* in the early twentieth century and continuing through various movements for the creation of an Indonesian national 'school' of Muslim jurisprudence (*madhhab*) in the first decades of independence.³ During the middle decades of the twentieth century, these jurisprudential projects were unfolding alongside various other initiatives for the further Islamisation of Indonesian society, through both military and political means.⁴

In this essay I will present an overview of some of the most dramatic developments in modern reconceptualisations of 'the Way and the Community' in the discourses of two major twentieth-century Islamist institutions – Masjumi and the Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (DDII) – and their respective leaders, M. Natsir and Anwar Harjono. Their fundamental re-envisionings of classical Muslim paradigms of communal boundaries and religious authority have contributed to a radical reshaping of the symbolic language and sphere of social action for subsequent generations of Islamist activists in Indonesia and reflect aspects of broader trends evident in other parts of the Muslim world over the past five decades.

Natsir's voluminous writings cover a broad range of issues, but central to his work is a concern with the formal establishment of Islamic symbols and institutions within all aspects of Indonesian public life. A survey of his statements defining the 'Way' and the 'Community' for modern Indonesian Muslims reveals how this influential figure came to define the communal boundaries and proper models of behaviour in ways that were to have a lasting impact upon subsequent generations of thinkers and activists. Tracking the changes in Natsir's speeches and published writings through the formal end of Masjumi party activities in 1960, and his later founding of the officially non-political DDII, enables the opening of new perspectives on the development of Indonesian Islamist thought during the country's much-touted late-twentieth-century 'Islamic resurgence'.

Masjumi and M. Natsir

Masjumi, the abbreviated name for the Madjelis Sjoero Moeslimin Indonesia, was founded in 1943 to be an umbrella organisation for various Islamic groups serving the interests of wartime mobilisation of the Indonesian population under the Japanese occupation. Conceptualised under such an institutional, rather than an ideological rubric, Masjumi had originally brought together Muslims of a wide variety of orientations, ranging from

traditionalists to modernists. With the defeat of the Japanese and the Indonesian declaration of independence in 1945, Masjumi transformed itself into a political party with its own paramilitary wing.⁵ In the process, the leadership of the party came to be dominated by Western-educated Muslims of a reformist orientation such as Soekiman Wirjosandjojo.⁶

The primary symbolic issue for the Islamist political agenda of Masjumi was the 'Jakarta Charter' (*Piagam Jakarta*), an early draft of the preamble to the Indonesian constitution drafted in June of 1945. This document included the controversial pronouncement that the Republic was founded on a set of principles, the first of which being: 'the belief in God, with the obligation for adherents of Islam to practice Islamic law'.⁷ The second clause in this phrase – known in Indonesia as the 'seven words' (*tujuh kata*) – was, however, struck from the final draft of the preamble in a move that came to be viewed by some Muslim Indonesians as a betrayal of their aspirations for independence and an ungracious recompense for their participation in the struggles that led to it. For Muslims of this persuasion, the reassertion of this formal statement on the establishment of Islamic law in the Indonesian nation became the defining political issues of the decade that followed.⁸

Nevertheless throughout the late 1940s and 1950s a considerable amount of internal diversity continued to characterise Masjumi, this even despite the splitting off of major blocks of Muslims such as the PSII and the NU.⁹ In this period of constantly changing political constellations, the Masjumi leadership found itself in the near-impossible situation of attempting to manage workable political relationships both with a complex of Muslim groups representing a wide range of religious views and political ideologies, as well as with Protestant and Roman Catholic parties who shared some Muslim concerns about the growing influence of Communism in the country.¹⁰ For most of this tumultuous history, the head of Masjumi was M. Natsir, and the rapidly evolving political realities of his time eventually led to his declaration of a split from the official state ideology of *Pancasila* politics toward ideological Islamism.

It was within this context that Natsir came to be Indonesia's most prominent voice of Islamist opposition and arguably the most powerful Muslim politician in modern Indonesian history. Natsir was born in 1908 in West Sumatra where he attended Dutch colonial schools. He later moved to Bandung to continue his studies, and there he further developed proficiencies in European languages that were to become such an important resource in the development of his political, social and religious thought. It was also during that same time that he first began to associate with the Islamic reformist organisation PERSIS and met its leader, A. Hassan.¹¹ At Bandung, Natsir became an avid student of Hassan, attracted by both his ideas on scripturalist religious reform, and his vision of Islam as a systematised lifestyle of personal piety. By 1936, Natsir had become the head teacher of the PERSIS '*pesantren*'.¹² This new-style school differed significantly

from the type of traditional Javanese institution of the same name, as it was reconceptualised as a centre for the propagation of Islamic reformist agendas, rather than as primarily a place for the teaching of *fiqh* and other traditional Islamic religious sciences. In addition to his work as a teacher, Natsir was also a frequent contributor to PERSIS publications, and a member of its management board.¹³ Through his work in PERSIS, Natsir developed an understanding of the relationship between ritual behaviour and ideological mobilisation that was to become central to his political and social activism throughout the rest of his career.

While working so energetically for PERSIS through the 1930s, Natsir was also engaged with developments in other activist organisations such as the Jong Islamieten Bond and the Sarekat Islam. Through his association with Sarekat Islam Natsir came into contact with another Muslim leader who was to have a formative influence on him. H. Agus Salim¹⁴ introduced Natsir to aspects of formal organisation-building and the workings of a political party.¹⁵ Indeed, in an interview near the end of his life, Natsir made the point of mentioning that although at Bandung he studied more closely under A. Hassan, he actually felt that he benefited more from the guidance of H. Agus Salim.¹⁶ On the level of ideas, Natsir was influenced in particular by Salim's conception of the Islamic religious basis for Indonesian nationalism.¹⁷ Throughout over six decades of public life, a central preoccupation of Natsir's writings was nationalism and its relationship to Islamic religious ideals and the political aspirations of the Indonesian *umma*. Central to the visions of both Masjumi and its depoliticised successor institutions under Natsir's influence was a reimagining of the *umma* in terms of a model of the Indonesian nation-state.

By the early 1950s, Natsir's thoughts on the relation between Islam and national politics had come to fruition with the publication of his landmark essay 'Islam as Ideology'. In this text, Natsir built his argument for envisioning Islam as an all-encompassing system of law and society by repeating an oft-quoted line from the British Orientalist H.A.R. Gibb, 'Islam is much more than a system of theology; it is a complete civilization.'¹⁸ Natsir further developed this totalising model in the direction of a systematised 'worldview', arguing that Muslims have 'a world-view (*levensbeschouwing*) and ideology of their own, just as Christians have, and just as Fascists or Communists have their own respective worldviews and ideologies.'¹⁹ Elsewhere, Natsir equates the 'ideology' of Islam with a 'philosophy of life' (*falsafah hidup*) in which considerations of the world beyond (*akhirat*) can never be separated from the affairs of this world (*dunia*).²⁰ It is striking both in these passages and across Natsir's corpus as a whole the way in which he argues for an understanding of the essence of Islam that is completely framed by categories developed in modern European thought – and, indeed, elsewhere in his writings he refers directly to Emile Durkheim and William James in constructing his own working definition of 'religion'

(*agama*), and derives his vision of Islam in history from other modern works including Lothrop Stoddard's *New World of Islam*.²¹

In these developments, it becomes clear that Natsir's evolving understandings of Islam were based not upon traditional categories from the Islamic religious sciences but rather upon secularised perspectives on religion and society. On a certain level, this should not be too surprising as it simply underscores the importance of acknowledging the common educational background of the emerging Indonesian elite across party and confessional lines during the first decades of independence (with the notable exception of the NU religious leadership). In this light, Natsir's appeals to European scholars could be read in part as attempts to establish his own intellectual credentials as they would be evaluated by his Western-educated colleagues.

Among modern Islamist thinkers, however, the appeal to such authorities signals an epistemological shift that has served to inform a range of radical reconceptualisations of long-established religious institutions and ideas. Primary among them were those implicated in ongoing debates about Muslim identities constructed in relation to 'the Way' (*al-summa*) and 'the Community' (*al-jama'a*). In Natsir's discussions of these issues in the 1950s, there is a clear shift in his thought away from his earlier qualified support for *Pancasila* to more absolutist positions on the role of Islam as the only authentic ideology of the Indonesian nation-state.²²

Natural law and Muslim majoritarianism

In a 1957 address to the Indonesian Constitutional Assembly, Natsir put forward a model of state that he referred to as 'Theistic Democracy' – a system in which the sovereignty of the people was to be exercised within certain limits determined by God. The word Natsir used to refer to these limits was *hudud*, a term which in Islamic legal discourses and Islamist political rhetoric is usually used to refer to canonically established penalties for certain offences. Only Islam, he argued, could serve to ground the constitution in what he believed to be both the eternal 'Way' of Human life ordained by God and the 'feelings and beliefs of the people'.²³

Natsir, however, conceived of these 'limits' (set by God) as 'universal moral principles' in a way reminiscent of some Western discourses on Natural Law.²⁴ The body of ideas referred to as 'Natural Law' in European traditions of philosophy and jurisprudence is both broad and internally diverse.²⁵ Among them, however, some scholars perceive certain shared characteristics, including an assumption that there are objective values embodied by law that can be accessed through human reason, as well as the general sense that civil law not only governs individuals in society, but that it is also itself governed by certain external constraints.²⁶ Natsir's conception of Islamic law could be described by these broad parameters as well, albeit using unusual language for describing 'the Way.' Natsir repeatedly

stressed that human beings were called upon to use their God-given reason in interpreting the law, maintaining that Islam both encourages the use of and provides necessary parameters for the exercise of human reason.²⁷ Thus, Natsir contended that while reason plays an important role in understanding the Way ordained by Natural Law, one cannot establish law based upon the free exercise of human reason alone for that would lead to chaos; as he expressed it in Dutch, 'Vrijheid zonder gezag is anarchie.'²⁸

In the notes accompanying the text of his 1957 Constituent Assembly address, Natsir points out the origins of such an approach to Natural Law in the work of the thirteenth-century Roman Catholic theologian, Thomas Aquinas.²⁹ The implications of the link between medieval Christian and modern Islamist thought here are interesting for a number of reasons. For one, it once again raises issues of the impact of 'Western' formulations of 'religion' upon modern Muslim thought. Mention has already been made of the importance of Gibb's statement on the nature of Islam for Natsir's project of conceptualising Islam as an 'ideology'. In fact, throughout his voluminous writings on Islam, Natsir also drew far more on works of European Orientalism than he did from either classical Arabic sources or modern Indonesian publications. His colonial education gave him access to modern studies of Islam and Muslim societies written in English, German, and French, as well as Dutch. Sources of this type are cited extensively in his essays on medieval Muslim thinkers like Ibn Rushd, Ibn Tufayl and Miskawayh.³⁰

Beyond such appeals to forms of knowledge culturally valued by mid-twentieth-century Indonesian elites, Natsir's citation of a medieval Roman Catholic theologian in establishing his conception of 'Natural Law' raises other questions about just what he had in mind when deploying such a reference and, more generally, what he found appealing in certain forms of Natural Law reasoning. Modern revivals and reinterpretations of Natural Law theory flourished in the middle decades of the twentieth century, not only in Europe and the USA, but also in many parts of the world in an atmosphere marked by the United Nations' *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* in 1948 and processes of decolonisation in many parts of Asia and Africa.³¹ During those years as well, a prominent modern Roman Catholic philosopher involved with the formulation of the United Nations' *Declaration*, Jacques Maritain, was developing his arguments that most basic principles of Natural Law are not known through reason, but 'con-naturally' or 'by inclination' and that these impressionistic bases for right are ultimately incontestable.³²

Such positions have been advanced by a number of modern scholars and activists, ranging from liberal advocates of universal human-rights norms to conservative Christian religious thinkers. Mid-twentieth-century advocates for conceptions of Natural Law – often recast in the language of 'Natural Right' – were, however, by no means uniformly religious. In fact, one of the most influential voices in the modern revival of appeals to Natural Right

was the political philosopher Leo Strauss (d. 1973) who, in defence of his own conceptions of the absolute truth of Natural Right, argued that 'transcendence is not a preserve of revealed religion. In a very important sense it was implied in the meaning of political philosophy as the quest for the natural or best political order.'³³ Elsewhere Strauss argued that philosophy sought the 'Way' in nature, the basic order of the cosmos, rather than in mere human custom – a position that would have been well received among the modern Muslim reformists of Natsir's Masjumi.³⁴ The Straussian and Islamist perspectives would appear to share a number of other affinities as well, including their radical rejection of historicism, their fixations with conceptualising 'the best regime', and their appeals to forms 'reason' viewed as the proprietary resources of a modern intellectual elite.³⁵ This is not to posit any direct influence of either Strauss or Maritain on Natsir, but rather simply an attempt to call attention to, and to raise new questions about, some aspects of the complexity of modern conversations on religion, law and society that need to be engaged more imaginatively in studies of modern Muslim intellectual history.

Modern Muslim appeals to such conceptions of Natural Law created new spaces for the impressionistic elaboration of agendas based upon implicit but unexamined assumptions about 'the Way' of God. This 'givenness' was expressed by Natsir in rhetorical reductions such as 'Islam, you know,... it's Islam', (*Islam itu... ialah Islam*).³⁶ Natsir's assumptions about an essentialised 'Islam' dovetailed with his understanding of Muslim majoritarianism as legitimising the implementation of his own particular model for the modern Indonesian state. That is, his reconceptualisation of 'the Way' was complemented by an equally radical reimagination of the modern Muslim 'Community.' Indeed, in his published writings and public speeches, Natsir appeared to take for granted that just as the 'essence' of Islam could be impressionistically appealed to, so could the 'Muslim' character of Indonesian society be assumed in this emerging Indonesian Islamist discourse. The argument made by Natsir and other Masjumi activists appealed to raw demographic data reporting near 90 per cent of the population of the Indonesian Archipelago identified themselves as Muslims.

Along these lines, Natsir evoked a conception of democracy in terms of pure majoritarianism, with little emphasis placed on guarantees of the rights of minorities in a representative system. Under such an orientation to mass politics, a simple majority vote was considered sufficient to confer legitimacy upon as well as to confirm the agenda – and the legal order – of the largest sector of society. As Natsir himself expressed it, those who reject Islamic law out of consideration of not harming the feelings of non-Muslims harm the Muslims whose number is twenty times greater than those of other groups. For this would mean an encroachment upon the rights of the majority'.³⁷

In his view, the sheer fact that a demographic majority of Indonesians identify themselves as Muslims implies that all those who acknowledge

Islam as their religion should also then necessarily accept a particular understanding of an essentialised Islam that was self-evident to modern Muslim reformists like himself. That is, an unchanging 'Qur'anic law' valid for all times and places.³⁸ Thus invoking a certain kind of 'rights' discourse and an essentialised imagination of the Sharia, Natsir argued that it was the only possible means through which to ensure the political justice necessary for social stability. Implementing the law of Islam in modern Indonesia, he argued, would reflect the cultural values and 'living law' of the country's Muslim majority, and establish distinct delimitations of rights and obligations between rulers and the general population.³⁹

The picture, however, had become more complicated for Indonesian Islamists following the 1955 elections in which Masjumi took only a slim majority (53 per cent) in only one province (Central Sumatra) and earned returns of only between 10 and 45 per cent in most other areas.⁴⁰ In the wake of this shattering of their earlier assumptions about confessional identity in relation to political participation, the Masjumi leadership spun the results to emphasise what they perceived to be a crisis within the *umma*, i.e., that although '90 per cent' of the Indonesian population is identified as Muslim, only a small minority of them could be said 'to know and be aware of Islam' (*tahu dan sadar akan Islam*).⁴¹ Chastened by their failure in the sphere of electoral politics during the parliamentary period (1950–8), some Masjumi leaders began to search for other ways through which to pursue the further Islamisation of Indonesian society under the political restrictions imposed by Soekarno's 'Guided Democracy' (1959–65). In the early years of Suharto's New Order (1965–98), Natsir and a group of his former Masjumi colleagues turned their attentions toward initiating strategies aimed at 'converting' the Muslim masses to their own vision of Islam through intensive programs of religious propagation (*da'waldakwah*) that were to be conceived of as formally outside the structures of party politics.⁴²

Anwar Harjono and the Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (DDII)

In February 1967, Natsir and a number of other former Masjumi leaders established a foundation (*yayasan*) to further the deepening Islamisation of Indonesian society called the Indonesian Council for Islamic Propagation (Dewan Dakwah Indonesia Islamiyah, DDII). As expressed in a phrase that DDII activists themselves attribute to Natsir, 'Before we conducted *dakwah* through politics, now we pursue politics through *dakwah*.'⁴³ This agenda was pursued aggressively through various means, including publishing ventures and preaching activities. In this mode, DDII established and maintained communication with broad networks of Muslim preachers, teachers and activists aligned with a range of pietistic, populist and Islamic nationalist sentiment across the archipelago.⁴⁴ Working under the severe political restrictions of Suharto's New Order state, Natsir's ersatz successor

Anwar Harjono further developed Islamist views on the definition of 'the Way and the Community' in ways that responded to the changing realities of Indonesian society.⁴⁵

As head of the DDII, Harjono further developed and deployed emerging Indonesian Islamist reconceptualisations of 'the Way and the Community'. For example, Harjono recast Natsir's idea of 'Natural Law' as a concept in Indonesian thinking about Islam as *sunnatullah* (literally 'the Way of God')⁴⁶ which Harjono then defined as: 'A law that is not made by human beings, but influences and in fact serves to order human society, with or without their agreement to it.'⁴⁷ In this mode, Harjono argued that God's law, as made known through the Qur'an and Sunna, must be appealed to directly and established as a 'living law' through the practice of a kind of intuitive *ijtihad* – rather than relying on the man-made *fiqh* of the established schools.⁴⁸ Instead of the formalised methodologies of Muslim jurisprudence, Harjono argued that what is most urgently needed is a way of 'capturing the spirit' of the Qur'an and Sunna in a way that is 'impressionistic and always up to date.'⁴⁹ In such an unarticulated, tacitly understood 'spirit' of Islamic law as *Sunnatullah*, Harjono can be seen not only as participating in a particular stream of modern Natural Law discourse, but also as inverting the classical paradigm of Islamic legal thought – never really 'searching for God's law',⁵⁰ but often arguing in a way that takes particular conceptualisations of the Sharia for granted.

While Harjono's rhetorical deployment of 'the Way' then was left deliberately under-defined, his delimitation of the boundaries of 'the Community' was not. In fact, a major characteristic of Harjono's thought is the aggressive assertion of both Islamist and Indonesian nationalist interests in his imagination of 'the Community'.⁵¹ This comes through in his repeated discussions of the Jakarta Charter, which he considered to be not only 'an inseparable part of the 1945 constitution', and an artefact representing national consensus (*ijma*), but also a document with implications for the lives of Muslim Indonesians in this life and the next.⁵² The upshot of all this, for Harjono, was that the essence of Indonesian national identity is *Ke-Islam-an*, a reified abstract construction that might be rendered in English as 'Islamicity'.⁵³ Given this equation of Islam and Indonesianness, Harjono was constantly consternated over the glaring discrepancies between the number of Muslim citizens and the limited scope for formal Islamic institutions within the power structures of the Indonesian state. As the central question defining his 1968 dissertation for the University of Indonesia Law School, he asked, Why, with the vast majority of Indonesians being Muslim, is not Islamic law the law of the land?⁵⁴ Harjono attributed this situation to a combination of internal and external factors, but reacted most sharply to perceived outside influences impeding the application of Islamic law in Indonesian society.⁵⁵ It was in his aggressive stance toward any spectre of such a threat to the *umma* that the sharp edge of Harjono's communitarianism is most apparent: 'the Way', it appears, could

be left rather imprecisely defined if the outlines of 'the Community' were firmly enough asserted.

Prominent among those to be blamed for the present sorry state of affairs, according to Harjono, are the political and social legacies of European colonialism and the continuing domination of Muslim lands by the 'the West' through its technological and economic supremacy. In the overview sketch of the history of Islamic law forming part of his dissertation, Harjono points to European colonial intervention as introducing 'Christian' ideas of church/state distinctions into Islam, weakening Islamic law and allowing foreign legal systems to prosper at its expense.⁵⁶ In his position as leader of the DDII, Harjono grew increasingly outspoken in his railings against the perceived threat of 'Christianisation' (*Kristenisasi*) and other dangers to Islam. Fundamental to the pervasive sense of siege that framed Harjono's vision of Islam in modern Indonesia was his view that the Muslim community faces a constant threat of *Kristenisasi*, the proponents of which Harjono imagined to also be engaged in various other conspiratorial projects against Islam, in cahoots with the tragically all-too-familiar cabal of Jews, Communists, atheists and other usual suspects.⁵⁷

However, these were not the only conversations on Islam being developed by Indonesians during the latter half of the twentieth century. In fact, it was these very same decades (1970s–1990s) that witnessed remarkable developments within the 'traditionalist' Nahdlatul Ulama, as well as the formation of a movement for the 'renewal' (*Pembaharuan*) of Indonesian Islam along more tolerant and pluralist lines, led by figures such as Abdurrahman Wahid and Nurcholish Madjid.⁵⁸ For their provocative presentations of such ideas as 'secularisation' and, later, 'inter-religious *fiqh*', Madjid and other *Pembaharuan* thinkers have been continually subjected to strident criticisms in Indonesian Islamist publications such as *Media Dakwah*. There have been a great many examples of this over recent decades as can be seen, for example, in the December 1992 special issue dedicated to blasting Madjid's ideas and attacking his character by attempting to link his ideas to the agenda of an imagined 'Zionist Freemasonry Movement'.⁵⁹

Contemporary Indonesian enthusiasts for such conspiracy theories have kept alive the siege mentality promoted by Masjumi's latter-day supporters in the DDII, who continue to rail against the perceived threats of secularism, Communism and missionary Christianity spreading in the country.⁶⁰ To combat these apparent dangers, Islamist activists have called for intensified campaigns of education and campus activism to propagate a vision of knowledge that will capitalise on selective, attractive aspects of modernity which can be considered 'Islamic'.⁶¹ One important aspect of these contemporary developments remains the popularisation of radical reconceptualisations of historical Muslim understandings of 'the Way and the Community' (*ahl al-sunna wa'l-jama'a*) – informed by recent influences of modern, 'Western' legal and political thought opportunistically deployed to serve agendas for the assertion of more formalistic expressions of Islamic

identity for the nation-state in the world's most populous Muslim country. Central to these developments in Indonesian Islam have been the appropriation of certain elements of modern Natural Law and Natural Right theory, as well as politically populist conceptions of a majoritarian mandate. Through the selective adaptation of such legal and political ideas, Natsir and those he inspired have forged new models for the implementation of a self-consciously Islamic conception of social order in Indonesia's continually evolving public sphere.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dan Lev for his insightful and instructive comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

Notes

- 1 M. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, 3 vols, Chicago, Ill.: Chicago University Press, 1974, Vol. I, pp. 247–79 and 384–92.
- 2 H. Said Agiel Siradj, *Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah dalam Lintas Sejarah*, Yogyakarta: LKPSM, 1997, p. x.
- 3 R.M. Feener, 'Indonesian Movements for the Creation of a 'National Madh-hab', *Islamic Law and Society*, 2001, Vol. 9, No. 1, pp. 83–115.
- 4 C. van Dijk, *Rebellion under the Banner of Islam: The Darul Islam in Indonesia*, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1981; and B. Effendy, *Islam dan Negara: Transformasi Pemikiran dan Praktik Politik Islam di Indonesia*, Jakarta: Penerbit Paramadina, 1998, pp. 92–111.
- 5 The paramilitary wing was named 'Hizboellah', and in support of its mission Masjumi's leaders argued that it is a universal obligation (*fardhoe'ain*) for Muslims to take up armed jihad (*melakoekan peperangan Djihad*) in defence of the country when invaded by 'unbelievers' (*koeffar*). See: *Anggaran Dasar dan Ren-tjana Perdjoengan Masjoemi Partai Politik Indonesia*, Bukit Tinggi: Dewan Pemimpin Daerah Masjoemi Soematera Barat, April 1946, pp. 36–7.
- 6 For a collection of writings by Wirjosandjojo in Dutch, English and Indonesian, see: *Wasan Politik Seorang Muslim Patriot: Dr. Soekiman Wirjosandjojo, 1989–1974*, no publisher.: Yayasan Pusat Pengkajian, Latihan, dan Pengembangan Masyarakat, 1984. An admiring biography of this figure can be found in: Tamar Djaja. *Dr. Soekiman Wirjosandjojo, Ketua Oemoem 'Masjoemi'* Boekit Tinggi: Penjiaran Ilmoe, no date, p. 5.
- 7 'ke-Tuhanan, dengan kewajiban mendjalankan sjari' at Islam bagi pemeluk-pemeluknja', M. Yamin, *Naskah Persiapan Undang-un dang Dasar 1945* (Jakarta, 1959–60), Vol. I, p. 145. See also B.J. Boland, *The Struggle of Islam in Modern Indonesia*, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982, p. 26 and Appendix I.
- 8 Partisan aspects of the debates over the constitutional status of this document, as well as appendices containing relevant primary materials, can be found in H. Endang Saifuddin Anshari, *Piagam Jakarta, 22 Juni 1945: Sebuah Konsensus Nasional tentang Dasar Negara Republik Indonesia, 1945–1949*, Jakarta: Gema Insani Press, 1997. A shorter version of this work in English can be found in the same author's M.A. thesis, 'The Jakarta Charter of June 1945: A History of the Gentleman's Agreement between the Islamic and the Secular Nationalists in Modern Indonesia', McGill University Institute of Islamic Studies, 1976.
- 9 Such fragmentation of Indonesia's Muslim community along party lines effectively guaranteed the failure of formally Islamic political aspirations at the polls

- of the 1955 general elections. As will be discussed below, this dramatic loss led some of the Masjumi leadership to radically rethink the party's vision and tactics.
- 10 Listings of the more than two dozen parties active between 1945 and 1965 and their respective cabinet representatives can be found in S. Finch and D.S. Lev, *Republic of Indonesia Cabinets: 1945–1965*, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Modern Indonesian Project, 1965. For a more in-depth analysis of the complexities of the middle years of this period, see D.S. Lev, *The Transition to Guided Democracy: Indonesian Politics, 1957–1959*, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Southeast Asia Program, 1966.
 - 11 Soebadio Sastrosatomo, 'Percikan Pemikiran Dr. Mohammad Natsir dalam Pergumulan Intelektual di Indonesia', in Anwar Harjono (ed.), *M. Natsir: Sumbangan dan Pemikirannya untuk Indonesia*, Jakarta: Penerbit Media Dakwah, 1995, pp. 103–9. For an evocative description of PERSIS and its early activities in Bandung, see Ajip Rosidi, *M. Natsir: Sebuah Biografi I*. Jakarta: Girmukti Pasaka, 1990, pp. 15–80.
 - 12 H.M. Federspiel, *Islam and Ideology in the Emerging Indonesian State: The Persatuan Islam (PERSIS), 1923–1957*, Leiden: Brill, 2001, pp. 114–15.
 - 13 P. Burns, *Revelation and Revolution: Natsir and the Panca Sila*, Townsville (Australia): Committee of South-East Asian Studies, James Cook University of North Queensland, 1981, p. 4. On Natsir's early involvement with PERSIS, see also H.M. Federspiel, *Islam and Ideology*, pp. 113–20.
 - 14 Collected essays Salim's life can be found in *Seratus Tahun Haji Agus Salim*, Jakarta: Penerbit Sinar Harapan, 1984. For a collection of his writings in Dutch and Indonesian, see *Djedjak Langkah Hadji A. Salim: Pilihan Karangan Utjapan dan Pendapat Beliau dari Dulu sampai Sekarang*, Jakarta: Tintamas, 1954. One of his small booklets on Islamic theology is also available in English translation as H. Agus Salim, *A Philosophical Explanation of Tauhid, Taqdir, and Tawakkal*, trans. J.T. Salim, Jakarta: PT Intermasa, 1987.
 - 15 Anwar Harjono et al., *M. Natsir: Sumbangan dan Pemikirannya untuk Indonesia*, Jakarta: Penerbit Media Dakwah, 1995, p. 52.
 - 16 M. Natsir, *Pendidikan, Pengorbanan, Kepemimpinan, Primordialisme, dan Nostalgia*, Jakarta: Media Dakwah, 1987, p. 14.
 - 17 Harjono, *M. Natsir*, p. 11 and M. Laffan, *Islamic Nationalism and Colonial Indonesia: The Umma below the Winds*, London: Routledge, 2003, have described in detail Salim's role in developing Islamic conceptions of Indonesian nationalism.
 - 18 M. Natsir, *Islam Sebagai Ideologie*. Jakarta: Penjiaran Ilmu, n.d., p. 7. There, as well as in his essay *Agama dan Politik, Capita Selecta 2*, February 1950, p. 157, Natsir presents the English of Gibb's statement somewhat differently, using 'religious system' for Gibb's 'system of theology'. B.J. Boland originally pointed to this discrepancy in Boland, *The Struggle of Islam in Modern Indonesia*, p. 79. For the English original of Gibb's remarks, see *Whither Islam? A Survey of Modern Movements in the Moslem World*, London: Victor Gollancz, 1932, p. 12.
 - 19 Natsir, *Islam sebagai Ideologie*, p. 10.
 - 20 M. Natsir, *Islam sebagai Dasar Negara*, Jakarta: DDII, 2000, p. 3.
 - 21 For example, in Natsir, *Islam sebagai Dasar Negara*, pp. 20 and 79. The latter seems ironic in light of his calls earlier in this same pamphlet to reject the *gedachte-traditie* of European Orientalism (6). Such a schizophrenic relationship with Orientalist scholarship became a pattern in the works of later *dakwah*-minded Indonesian Muslims. For example, in the speech delivered on the award of his honorary doctorate by Hazairin at the Universitas Islam Djakarta, Aboebakar Atjeh both warned of the 'poisons' slipped into Western writings on Islam and urged students to study the great achievements of Islamic learning in the works of Brockelmann, Nicholson, and Gibb. See A. Atjeh, *Islam: Sumber Dihad*, Jakarta: Universitas Islam Djakarta, 1967, pp. 31 and 54–5.

- 22 Through the early 1950s, Natsir had continued to speak and write of what he saw as the complimentary relationship between the social visions of Islam and *Pancasila*. Until 1954, Natsir was still publicly defending *Pancasila* and its principle of 'the One-ness of God', (*Ke-Tuhanan Yang Maha Esa*), expressing such views in a number of oft-reprinted speeches, including 'Apakah Pantjasila Bertentangan dengan Adjaran Al-Quran?' However, as the Indonesian Communist Party (*Partai Komunis Indonesia/PKI*) gained power in the later 1950s, Natsir abandoned his earlier attempts at reconciling *Pancasila* and Islam. From the middle of that decade on, Natsir reacted sharply with his rejection of *Pancasila* as a 'secular' and thus 'un-Islamic' form Indonesian nationalism being more aggressively reasserted as a symbol of resistance to the idea of an Islamic state in Indonesia. See M. Natsir, *Capita Selecta II*, Jakarta: Pustaka Pendis, 1957, pp. 144–50, originally delivered in May 1954.
- 23 Natsir, *Islam sebagai Dasar Negara*, p. 4.
- 24 Yusril Ihza, 'Modernisme Islam dan Demokrasi: Pandangan Politik Mohammad Natsir', in Anwar Harjono, dkk. *M. Natsir: Sumbangan dan Pemikirannya untuk Indonesia*, Jakarta: Media Dakwah, 1995, pp. 143–4. Bocquet-Siek, Margaret and Robert Cribb, *Islam and the Panca Sila*, Townsville, Australia: Committee of South-East Asian Studies, James Cook University of North Queensland, 1991, pp. 19–20.
- 25 For a sense of the range of contemporary natural-law theories, see, for example, R. George (ed.), *Natural Law Theories: New Essays*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1992 and R. Barnett, 'A Law Professor's Guide to Natural Law and Natural Rights', *Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy*, 1997, Vol. 20, p. 655.
- 26 For more on such modern conceptions of 'natural law' in the Western tradition, see B. Bix, 'Natural Law Theory: The Modern Tradition', in J.L. Coleman and S. Shapiro (eds), *Handbook of Jurisprudence and Legal Philosophy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. 3–4.
- 27 M. Natsir, *Islam dan Akal Merdeka*, Tasikmalaja: Persatoean Islam, 1947. (originally appeared in *Panji Islam* – Medan, 1941), p. 16, citing the Qur'anic verse *al-Balad*, pp. 8–12.
- 28 Quoted in Anwar Harjono, *M. Natsir*, p. 3. Of course, such emphases on the importance of order – even to the point of deferring religious ideals for the sake of political stability – have complex histories in both Sunni Islam and Roman Catholic thought.
- 29 For an introduction to Aquinas's thought on natural law and related issues, see J.M. Finnis, *Aquinas: Moral, Political, and Legal Theory*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- 30 A selection of these can be found in M.Natsir, *Capita Selecta I*, Bandung: W. Van Hoeve, 1954.
- 31 M.B. Crowe, *The Changing Profile of the Natural Law*, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1977, p. 251. It should be noted here that the provisional Indonesian constitution of 1950 was one of the first national constitutions to incorporate the text of the *Universal Declaration*.
- 32 J. Maritain, *Natural Law: Reflections on Theory and Practice*, South Bend, Ind.: St. Augustine's Press, 2001, p. 9, edited and introduced by William Sweet.
- 33 H. Gildin (ed.), *Political Philosophy: Six Essays by Leo Strauss*, Indianapolis, Ind.: Pegasus, 1975, p. 137.
- 34 L. Strauss, *Natural Right and History: A Cogent Examination of One of the Most Significant Issues in Modern Political and Social Philosophy*, Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1950, pp. 82–3.
- 35 Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, pp. 140–55.
- 36 Natsir, *Capita Selecta I*, p. 24.

- 37 P. Burns, *Revelation and Revolution: Natsir and the Panca Sila*, Townsville, Australia: Committee of South-East Asian Studies, James Cook University of North Queensland, 1981, p. 28, quoting: *Capita Selecta I*, p. 486. See also: *Islam Sebagai Dasar Negara*, pp. 9–11.
- 38 'diatas dunia ini tidak ada satu undang2 jang tidak pernah berubah. Hanya Qur-
ānlah jang tidak dapat berubah sedang undang2 dasar dimanapun dapat berubah'
in M. Natsir, *Tindjauan Hidup*, Jakarta: Penerbit Widjaya, 1957, p. 60.
- 39 M. Natsir, *Demokrasi di Bawah Hukum*, Jakarta: Penerbit Media Dakwah, 1988
(based upon lectures given in 1966), pp. 8–15.
- 40 R. Cribb, *Historical Atlas of Indonesia*, Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawaii
Press, 2000, pp. 163–4.
- 41 *Muktamar Masjumi ke VIII – 22–29 Des. 1956 di Bandung*, Jakarta: N.V. Pert-
jetakan Gunung Sahari, 1956, pp. 58–9.
- 42 R.W. Hefner, *Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia*, Princeton,
N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000, pp. 106–9.
- 43 Tamsil Linrung Lukman Hakiem, *Menunaikan Panggilan Risalah: Dokumentasi
Perjalanan 30 Tahun Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia*, Jakarta: DDII, 1997,
p. 8. Today, the main offices of DDII are at Jl. Kramat Raya, no. 45, the same
Jakarta address that was formerly the site of the Masjumi party offices (ibid., p.
17).
- 44 One such local figure who interacted with aspects of the broader *dakwah* move-
ment can be found in the Sumatran preacher Zaini Kunin. Attached to an
admiring biography of this figure are letters of appreciation for his involvement
in various Islamic causes, including one from Natsir in his capacity as head of
the DDII. Fakhrunnas Jabbar, MA, *Buya H. Zaini Kunin: Sebutir Mutiara dari
Lubuk Bendahara*, Pekanbaru: Universitas Islam Riau Press, 1990, pp. 137–9.
- 45 Harjono was born in 1923 to a pious *priyai* family from a village near Sidoarjo,
East Java and attended a 'nationalist' Taman Siswa school and later a Muham-
madiyah vocational training centre. After moving to Jakarta, he became
involved in the Indonesian independence movement and with Masjumi as head
of a Muslim youth group (Gerakan Pemuda Islam Indonesia). To the end of his
days, Harjono maintained that his life's work was primarily that of a *pelanjut*
(continuer) of the efforts towards the further Islamisation of Indonesian society
pioneered by Natsir. See Lukman Hakiem, *Perjalanan Mencari Keadilan dan
Persatuan: Biografi Dr. Anwar Harjono, SH*, Jakarta: Media Dakwah, 1993;
Asna Husin's dissertation, 'Philosophical and Sociological Aspects of Da'wah: A
Study of Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia', Columbia University, 1998, p.
107.
- 46 Indeed, the roots of Harjono's thoughts on the natural law of God in Natsir's
statements peculiar usage of *hudud* can be seen in Harjono's discussion of *sun-
natullah* as imposing 'limits' on the use of reason. *Indonesia Kita: Pemikiran
Berwawasan Iman-Islam*, Jakarta: Gema Insani Press, 1995, p. 27.
- 47 He further comments, curiously enough, that this is probably what it was that
Thomas Aquinas referred to *lex divina*. See Harjono, *Indonesia Kita*, p. 26.
- 48 Anwar Harjono, *Hukum Islam: Keluasan dan Keadilannya*. Jakarta: Bulan Bintang,
1968, p. 106.
- 49 Ibid., p. 101.
- 50 I borrow this phrase as a way of referring to the practice of classical Islamic
jurisprudence from the title of Bernard Weiss' interpretation of the work of the
thirteenth-century Shafi'i jurist, al-Amidi. See *The Search for God's Law: Islamic
Jurisprudence in the Writings of Sayf al-Din al-Amidi*, Salt Lake City, Utah:
University of Utah Press, 1992.
- 51 During the last years of his life, Harjono also devoted considerable attention to
the development of a new Islamic nationalist historiography in works such as the

edited volume on the life and work of Natsir which includes a newspaper column from *Republika* calling for the formal recognition of Natsir as a national hero (*pahlawan nasional*) and a book entitled *On the Birth of the Republic: The Devotion of the Sekolah Tinggi Islam and the Balai Muslimin Indonesia to their Nation*. The latter work, which was written together his close associate Lukman Hakiem, was published with prefaces from both the new leadership of the DDII (H. Ahmad Muflih Saefuddin and H. Hussein Umar), the Minister of Religious Affairs Tarmizi Taher and President Suharto himself as part of a campaign to designate the site of the Balai Muslimin Indonesia in Jakarta (Jl. Kramat Raya, no. 19) as a national historic site. Anwar Harjono et al., *M. Natsir: Sumbangan dan Pemikirannya untuk Indonesia*. Jakarta: Penerbit Media Dakwah, 1995, pp. 99–102; Anwar Harjono and Lukman Hakiem, *Sekitar Lahirnya Republik: Bakti Sekolah Tinggi Islam dan Balai Muslimin Indonesia Kepada Bangsa*, Jakarta: Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia, 1997, pp. i–vi.

52 *Indonesia Kita*, pp. 89, 96 and 123–4.

53 S.H. Anwar Harjono, *Perjalanan Politik Bangsa: Menoleh ke Belakang Menatap Masa Depan*. Jakarta: Gema Insani Press, 1997, p. 16.

54 *Indonesia Kita*, p. 260.

55 Harjono discusses what he perceives to have been the major ‘internal’ Islamic factors contributing to the current state of Islamic law in Muslim countries in his dissertation.

56 *Hukum Islam*, pp. 268–70. However, Harjono also directs considerable attention to factors within the history of the Muslim community itself that have contributed to contemporary dilemmas within the *umma*. Primary among these in Harjono’s view are the delimitation of Shari’a jurisdiction and the subordination of Islamic courts to the executive power of the caliph during the Umayyad period, as well as the much bemoaned – if elusive – ‘closure of the gate of *ijtihād*’, and the ways in which sectarian factionalism has impeded attempts for the codification of Islamic law. The latter of these is illustrated with the example of developments in Khedival Egypt (*ibid.*, p. 263).

57 Such tropes are common throughout Harjono’s published work. See, for example: *Indonesia Kita*, pp. 89–91.

58 G. Barton, ‘Indonesia’s Nurcholish Madjid and Abdurrahman Wahid as Intellectual Ulama: The Meeting of Islamic Traditionalism and Modernism in Neo-Modernist Thought’, *Studia Islamika*, 1997, Vol. IV, No. 1, 1997, pp. 29–82.

59 For an English-language overview of the contents of this particular issue, see Darul Aqsha, Dick van der Meij and Johan Hendrik Meuleman, *Islam in Indonesia: A Survey of Developments from 1988 to March 1993*, Jakarta: INIS, 1995, pp. 354–6. Islamist critiques of liberal positions published by Madjid’s Paramadina Press have continued to appear into the twenty-first century. See, for example, ‘Fiqh Lintas Agama Dikecam di Mana-mana’, *Media Dakwah*, Rabiul-Akhir-Jumadil Awal 1425H/ Mei-Juni 2004, pp. 33–4.

60 The emergence of such organisations in relation to DDII circles at the end of the New Order Period is discussed in R. Hefner, ‘Muslim Democrats and Islamist Violence in Post-Soeharto Indonesia’ in R. Hefner (ed.), *Remaking Muslim Politics: Pluralism, Contestation, Democratization*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005, pp. 296–8.

61 Such ideas had become a staple of Islamist apologetics over the course of the twentieth century, impacting Southeast Asia through various channels, including the work of the Palestinian/American teacher and activist Isma’il Faruqi. For an introduction to his life and work, see J.L. Esposito and J.O. Voll, *Makers of Contemporary Islam*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, pp. 23–38.

10 The political contingency of reform-mindedness in Indonesia's Nahdlatul Ulama

Interest politics and the *Khittah*

Greg Fealy

Since the 1980s, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) has been lauded as a champion of pluralism and religious and political reform within Indonesia. Foreign scholars and journalists and liberal-minded Indonesian commentators have praised the organisation's role in promoting inter-faith harmony, human rights, democratisation, new Islamic thought and grass-roots development. As such, NU is cast as a 'progressive' force in Indonesian society and a potential model for Islamic movements elsewhere in the world.¹

The highly favourable recent opinion of NU contrasts markedly with pre-1980s perceptions. During that time, NU's brand of Islamic traditionalism was often derided as irredeemably conservative and 'out of date' (*kolot*) in a rapidly modernising Indonesia. The organisation's members were chided as being too preoccupied with medieval Islamic teachings and heedless of contemporary thinking from other parts of the Muslim community or the West. Moreover, NU was seen as having few fixed principles beyond securing the interests of its members, particularly the elite *ulama* clans that dominated the organisation. Between the late 1950s and 1970s, it gained a reputation for political expediency by accommodating itself to the dictates of Sukarno's restrictive Guided Democracy administration (1959–65) and Soeharto's repressive New Order regime (1966–98). As such, it was viewed as contributing to the nation's authoritarian turn and impeding attempts at reform.

The shift from dismissive to positive assessments of NU reflected, in large part, significant changes within the organisation itself during the early 1980s. At the 1984 congress, NU members, with regime support, installed a new leadership and approved an internal reform program known as 'returning to the *khittah* (charter) of 1926', a reference to the principles supposedly avowed by NU's founders in 1926. Key figures in the revamped leadership were Abdurrahman Wahid, who became chairman of the executive (*tanfidziah*), and KH² Achmad Siddiq, the new head of the powerful religious advisory council (*syariah*). Abdurrahman was the charismatic and intellectually eclectic grandson of NU's founder, KH Hasyim Asy'ari, and a prominent activist and columnist; Achmad was a powerful East Java *ulama* and religious bureaucrat who had long been one of the organisation's more

dextrous political thinkers. Achmad first popularised and defined the notion of NU's *khittah*, but it was Abdurrahman and a group of younger intellectuals and activists who refined the concept and sought to spell out the details of its implementation. Although the *khittah* was seen to be drawing on NU's heritage, it was also seen as justifying a dramatic new direction for the organisation.³

According to much of the literature on NU in the 1980s, the central idea of 'returning to the *khittah* was that the organisation should abandon practical politics, in which it had been involved since 1952, and revert to the socio-religious orientation as originally set out by its 'founding fathers'. NU had been established as a *jamiah* (religious organisation), not a party, and the pro-*khittah* forces portrayed the return to this non-political status as a recapturing of past wisdom and purity of struggle. These 'political' years (1952–84) were described as a time of deviation from the true path: *ulama* had lost control of the organisation to politicians, corruption and excessive compromise were rife, and NU's religious objectives were neglected. The 1984 congress gave practical effect to the *khittah* by approving NU's withdrawal from the United Development Party (PPP), into which NU had been forcibly merged by the regime in 1973. *Nahdliyin* were given the freedom to join and vote for any party: henceforth, NU was to be politically neutral.⁴

The renewed emphasis on religio-social objectives led to a flourishing of new thought and activities within NU. Prominent among these were community development programmes, which included economic and political empowerment projects designed to improve the financial security and influence over local decision-making of grass-roots NU communities. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs), research centres and discussion groups were formed by young activists, many of which soon began producing publications regarding new interpretations of Islam and their practical application in fields as diverse as human rights, gender studies, environmental protection, inter-faith dialogue, hermeneutics and democratisation. To back up this intellectual activity, NU members became active in programs to 'socialise' the new ideas and win wider acceptance for them. Often these programmes attracted generous funding from foreign donors. One other decision from the 1984 congress is worthy of note, though not formally linked to the *khittah*: NU accepted the religiously neutral state ideology of Pancasila as its own ideological basis and also declared the Pancasila state to be final, thereby formally jettisoning the decades-old struggle for an Islamic state.

Not surprisingly, foreign scholars, myself included, found much to admire in NU's new orientation. After many decades of intellectual narrowness and reactivity, NU in the mid- to late Soeharto period moved to the forefront of Muslim reform efforts, producing fresh thinkers and initiatives which made it one of the most interesting organisations in Indonesia to study. Its departure from PPP, a party not generally held in high

regard by foreign scholars due to its compliance with regime dictates, was seen as a clever move that freed NU from the tight restrictions of formal political involvement. Moreover, many scholars were attracted to the idea, promoted by NU figures such as Abdurrahman Wahid and Fahmi Saifuddin, that the *khittah* allowed religion to be separated from politics, because *nahdliyin* were no longer compelled to give their loyalty to an Islamic party or to struggle for an 'Islamic state'. This raised the prospect of 'deconfessionalising' politics and creating a new, more genuinely secularised discourse. Scholars also praised NU's religious tolerance, comparing it favourably with the rising sectarian sentiment to be found in many modernist Muslim groups such as Dewan Dakwah and Persatuan Islam.

Many scholars regarded the *khittah* period of the 1980s and 1990s as not just a short-term phenomenon but rather a more enduring change in culture and thinking. They looked not just at the pioneering generation of *khittah* leaders such as Abdurrahman and Achmad but also the swelling ranks of younger intellectuals and activists who were committed to reformist ideals. This appeared to be a movement of lasting impact. NU was seen as having learned from the 'mistakes' of its 'political period' in the 1950s and 1960s and was now charting a new course which was forward-looking and pluralistic.

In this chapter, I intend to critically assess the legacy of the *khittah* from the vantage point of the post-Soeharto period. I will argue that, while the *khittah* produced significant change in the 1980s and 1990s, its longer-term impact has been exaggerated. Rather than marking a fundamental reorientation of NU, the *khittah* in fact was largely a response to specific political conditions – i.e., the repression by the New Order. Once the regime was removed and political conditions changed, NU reverted to earlier, less 'progressive' patterns of behaviour. Indeed, NU has not used the post-1998 freedoms to expand and develop its reform agenda but has instead abandoned many of the causes that it so enthusiastically embraced in the preceding fifteen years. Although NU still uses *khittah* to justify its actions, its current behaviour suggests a return not so much to the 'exemplary years' of the late 1920s, but rather to the 1950s and 1960s, when interest politics reigned supreme within the organisation. While a small group of intellectuals, NGO activists and younger *ulama* seek to uphold the *khittah* ideals of political neutrality, community service and reform, most NU *ulama* and cadre are again deeply immersed in power politics and competition for the spoils of office. The lofty principles which were so liberally sprinkled through the discourse of the 1980s and 1990s are now seldom heard and, when they are uttered, have a distinctly hollow ring.

***Khittah* and politics**

Any assessment of the nature of change in NU following the return to the *khittah* must focus in the first instance on politics, as it was the organisation's supposed withdrawal from 'practical politics' that paved the way for

its cultural and intellectual reorientation. In this section, I will look more closely at the development of the *khittah* concept and its implementation. Although the *khittah* is now commonly seen as the conceptual basis for NU's withdrawal from practical politics, the original formulation set out by Achmad Siddiq in 1979 contained few references to politics and made no mention of NU's relations with parties.⁵ His main concern was to provide a blueprint for reviving NU, believing that it had lost its momentum and become mired in political infighting. He emphasised NU's origins as a socio-religious organisation and the importance of ensuring the supremacy of *ulama* in decision-making. He also emphasised the moderation and flexibility that he saw as characterising NU's approach to religious, social, cultural and political issues. Apart from some general references to respecting the legitimate head of state and warning the government when it is in error, the text gives no strictures on political participation. As Martin van Bruinessen has observed, 'Not many NU members then felt that the return to the *khittah* of 1926 should imply a complete break with parliamentary politics.'⁶ Indeed, many NU members thought the document would see renewed emphasis on broader socio-political activity but not a withdrawal from politics altogether.

Direct reference to NU's withdrawal from party politics came at the 1983 national *ulama* conference, NU's second-highest decision-making forum, in Situbondo. It decided that: 'Political rights are one of the basic rights of all [Indonesian] citizens, including citizens who are members of Nahdlatul Ulama. But Nahdlatul Ulama is not a vehicle for practical political activity.'⁷ This was further strengthened at the NU Congress, held again in Situbondo the following year, in which it was decided that: 'Nahdlatul Ulama is not tied organizationally to any political party/organization', but 'Nahdlatul Ulama members are able to channel their aspirations through organizations/political parties of their choice.'⁸ To give practical effect to this organisational separation, the congress decreed that: 'the executive [members] of NU cannot serve concurrently on the executive boards of any political organizations.'⁹ These decisions effectively brought to a close NU's thirty-two-year direct involvement in politics. Individual members were free to exercise their political rights by joining and supporting parties but NU, as an organisation, would no longer have a role in formal politics.

The reasons for this growing emphasis on organisational neutrality were several. To begin with, NU had suffered more than a decade of marginalisation by the New Order regime. It had been forced into a hostile and unstable amalgamation with three rival Islamic parties in 1973 to form PPP, a primary aim of which had been to emasculate NU as a source of opposition to the New Order. Its most effective and vocal politicians were systematically purged from the new party, and NU leaders were repeatedly denied the chairmanship, even though it had by far the largest membership within PPP. Not only were political channels closed off for *nahdliyin*, so too were economic and government career opportunities. NU members experienced

growing difficulties in entering the bureaucracy, and the military and entrepreneurs often found government contracts and accessing credit denied them because of their NU affiliations. Government funding to NU Islamic schools dwindled at the same time as local security officials became increasingly reluctant to approve religious meetings and rallies. By the late 1970s, pressure was mounting within NU for a change of course. *Ulama* and younger activists began arguing that political opposition to the regime was futile and increasingly harmful to NU and that a more accommodatory approach was called for. In this environment, Achmad Siddiq's *khittah* concept served as the starting point for the process of reconciliation with the New Order. The price of good relations with the state was the abandonment of open political confrontation. While some NU leaders and intellectuals were genuine in their desire to make NU apolitical, a great many *nahdliyin* regarded the *khittah* as heralding a more subtle but lucrative form of politics. As Abdurrahman Wahid memorably observed: 'NU had to leave party politics in order to play politics better.'¹⁰

Not surprisingly then, the *khittah*'s implementation was, at best, uneven. The NU Central Board (Pengurus Besar Nahdlatul Ulama, PBNU) applied the ban on simultaneous party-NU appointments; these were reasonably strictly at the national level, but at the branch level, breaches of the new rules were widespread. Many NU leaders continued to hold executive positions in political parties without incurring sanctions from either the provincial or national boards.¹¹ Even NU leaders who kept to the letter of 'no-party' regulations found it easy to flout the spirit of the rule. Serving NU board members frequently engaged in de facto political activity, appearing at party events in a 'religious capacity' such as leading prayers or delivering brief sermons; audiences drew the obvious conclusion regarding their political sympathies. This was particularly prevalent during the 1987 general election when many NU leaders gave tacit support to Golkar in order to 'deflate' PPP.

This 'double game' in which parts of NU maintained political neutrality while other sections openly cultivated political connections served the organisation well. Funding from Golkar and other sections of the regime began flowing in generous quantities to NU leaders and schools, and talented or well-connected young *nahdliyin* found obstacles to their business or career ambitions removed. For many in NU, the *khittah* had proved an effective alternative means of securing their, and the organisation's, interests. Being a *nahdliyin* was no longer a drawback to professional or business advancement. The accompanying 'progressive' reform agenda of the *khittah* probably had, at best, a secondary attraction for such people.

The tension between the high principles of the *khittah* and the practical reality proved a source of division within NU and in subsequent years, reformers and intellectuals repeatedly sought to strengthen the regulations on political neutrality. At the 1989 NU congress in Yogyakarta, pro-*khittah* delegates succeeded in passing a motion requiring that NU maintain its

neutrality towards all parties. It declared that NU will not 'merge itself (*menggabungkan*) into any socio-political organization but also will not oppose any socio-political organization.' It also reiterated its commitment to remain a *jamiah*, stating explicitly that NU 'will not itself become a political party.'¹²

The 1992 National Ulama Conference at Bandar Lampung extended the interpretation of the *khittah* and its sections on politics gave the strictest guidelines yet on NU's relations to parties. They stated that:

Organizationally, Nahdlatul Ulama does not need to and may not become dependent on (*menyandarkan*) or tie itself to any other organization, although Nahdlatul Ulama members individually may become members or supporters of other organizations which do not harm or, moreover, are not in conflict with, the religious principles and aims of Nahdlatul Ulama [**bold type in the original**].¹³

It went on to declare that NU members must exercise their political rights 'without using the name or the authority of Nahdlatul Ulama.'¹⁴ The import of these decisions was clear enough: NU officials could not hold office in political parties and NU's name could not be evoked for political purposes.

Despite this attempt to further distance the organisation from politics, involvement in parties by NU officials and the use of NU's facilities and name for political purposes remained commonplace and open. In private, NU leaders admitted that this 'dualism' was inevitable because at the branch level many members wanted to 'have it both ways': on one hand, they liked the freedom which the *khittah* had given them and they were also attracted to the accompanying rhetoric regarding civil society strengthening and reform; on the other hand, they wanted to be able to extract advantage from NU's improved relations with the state. Given the low socio-economic standing of NU's membership and the lack of broader connections to power centres, even NU reformers were reluctant to condemn this continuing politicisation of NU.

Aside from politics, the implementation of *khittah*-related community development programmes also provides an interesting case study of broader *nahdliyin* commitment to reform. Numerous NGOs sprang up within and around NU to carry out programmes, ranging from economic ventures aimed at providing reliable income and training to poor *nahdliyin* to attitudinal change projects designed to raise awareness of progressive Islamic values and thinking. NU boarding schools (*pesantren*) were one of the major sites of these activities. NU also established a number of enterprises to employ members and give them business skills. Large sums of money were provided to support these activities, much of it coming from foreign agencies but some also emanating from Indonesian government and corporate sources. The impact of these programmes varied greatly. Most of the

economic projects brought little or no long-term benefit to ordinary *nahdliyin*. Corruption and mismanagement were rife, and nearly all the enterprises collapsed within a few years. NGOs had greater success with their educational and 'consciousness-raising' programmes. Large numbers of students and *nahdliyin* were introduced to new thinking on social, religious and political problems, and many branches began to espouse more liberal attitudes on such issues as gender equality, inter-faith dialogue, human rights and democratic values. NGOs did, however, often encounter problems with *kiai* when working in *pesantren*. While many *kiai* were keen to appear reform-minded by allowing educational programmes to be conducted in their schools, they nonetheless sought to restrict material that might encourage a more openly critical attitude among students towards *ulama* or the regime. More than a few *kiai* used NGO programs to lift their own community profile. Thus, while NU's social activism appeared impressive on paper, the reality was often less admirable.

***Khittah* in the reform era**

The fall of Soeharto and the New Order regime in May 1998 and the almost immediate lifting of political and social restrictions created a dilemma for NU leaders, particularly regarding their stance towards the *khittah*-related reform issues. On the one hand, those committed to NU's pursuit of progressive socio-religious agendas felt that the organisation could now act with much greater freedom and daring; on the other hand, the more politically inclined *nahdliyin* wanted the organisation to return to formal politics so that it might secure its share of power in the new democratic system. Under growing pressure from leading *ulama* and branches to enter politics, the NU board decided to compromise: NU itself would not become a party, but it would permit the founding of NU-based parties. Over the next five months, NU *ulama* and politicians would form four new parties, the largest and most important of which was PKB (Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa; National Awakening Party).¹⁵ All four parties had symbols which were based on NU's symbol of a globe encircled by nine stars and a tied rope and all appealed primarily to *nahdliyin* for support. Of these four parties, PKB was the only one to carry official NU sanction; NU described itself as 'facilitating' PKB's establishment and referred to the party as NU's 'favourite child' (*anak emas*).

The board's favouring of PKB led to immediate ructions within the broader NU community, especially from members who had sided with the other three NU parties or who remained loyal to PPP. The board was accused of breaching the spirit of the *khittah* and NU's own regulations regarding political non-partisanship. It defended its actions by arguing that it was only responding to the overwhelming demands from branches across the country for NU to be politically engaged. In keeping with the new democratic environment, the wishes of NU's masses had to be respected. The board also asserted that it had upheld the key tenets of the *khittah*: NU

members were still at liberty to join and vote for any political party; and the ban remained on all party executive members becoming NU officials. To this end, they asserted that the *khittah* was essentially about political freedom, rather than political neutrality.¹⁶

There can be little doubt, however, that PBNU had contravened the ideals of the *khittah*. The 1989 congress had declared that NU would not found a political party, yet by its own admission the board had acted as 'midwife' at PKB's birth; the Board had formed the teams that recommended PKB's founding, drafted its constitution and proposed its initial leadership. It had also approved the party symbol which bore close resemblance to NU's, and, while not obliging *nahdliyin* to vote for PKB, the board endorsed it as the only NU-sanctioned party, bringing it close to breaching the Bandar Lampung decision that NU's name, symbol and authority not be used for political purposes. Lastly, although members were not allowed simultaneously to hold positions in NU and PKB, many PBNU members attended PKB's founding and later campaigned for the party.

The most common justification for NU's involvement in the formation of PKB was that it redressed the marginalisation of the Soeharto years. The prominent *kiai* Cholil Bisri said that NU members had been 'fasting' for thirty years and that 'NU's position had until now always been on the fringe.' He claimed NU should be a pillar of the state given the size of its membership.¹⁷ *Kiai* Mustafa Bisri, one of the staunchest supporters of the *khittah*, lamented that NU members were 'sick of political organizations which till now have not carried their aspirations' and that 'NU leaders in PPP and Golkar only became milch cows (*sapi perah*) with the function of being vote-gatherers at election time.'¹⁸ He also stated:

We [*nahdliyin*] have only been onlookers to the political show, while continuing to pay taxes. So, when the door of reform was opened, NU people, who until now had only been followers, immediately wanted to form their own party. The important thing is that we can have our own house [i.e., party], so that the five-yearly trauma of elections until now can be eliminated.¹⁹

The female NU leader Khofifah Indar Parawansa made a similar point, referring to how Soeharto had 'systematically marginalized NU' and citing as evidence the absence of NU people at the rank of ministers, departmental directors-general, and officials in regional bureaucracies.²⁰ These statements make clear that in the *era reformasi*, NU's preoccupation was with gaining a share of power and securing its members' interests through direct political involvement, rather than pursuing broader ideals of systemic reform. Interestingly, the 1998 justifications for NU having its own political vehicle were similar to those used in 1952 when the organisation transformed itself into a party.

Other trends in the immediate post-Soeharto period undermined the reform movement within NU and exposed the fragility of its roots. Many

NGO activists and intellectuals were drawn into PKB and other NU-based parties, leaving their former institutions and programmes short of experienced staff and leadership. Numerous young activists and *ulama* became parliamentarians at the national or local level, more than a few of whom rose quickly in wealth and power while seldom referring to the ideals that they once espoused. Moreover, NU's internal discourse became more focused on pragmatism than idealism, with a subsequent withering of the rich intellectual exchanges that had marked the preceding fifteen years.

The first post-New Order NU congress took place in late 1999 in Kediri and saw a further redefining of the *khittah*. Two recent events influenced the delegates' deliberations. First, PKB had performed disappointingly in the June 1999 elections, gaining only 12.6 per cent of the national vote and 10.2 per cent of seats in the parliament – NU leaders had hoped it would gain at least 18 per cent. Second, to the surprise and delight of most NU members, Abdurrahman Wahid had been elected President in October of that year, the first *nahdliyin* to hold the post. In a bid to both preserve elements of the *khittah* as well as bolster support for PKB and Abdurrahman, the congress decided that:

NU members continue to use their political rights freely, critically and rationally in keeping with their political culture and aspirations, by continuing to hold to the principles of NU's 1926 *khittah* and the Nine Political Directives for NU Members which were decided by the XXVIIIth NU Congress in Yogyakarta,²¹ as well as considering the historical relations between NU and those parties whose formation was facilitated by PBNU.

All NU executive members from sub-branches to the national board are called upon to continue to regard NU as a socio-religious organisation, not as a political organisation. Because of that NU has always to have a critical attitude to every party and to control parties that are seen as channelling the aspirations of its members.²²

The clause about controlling parties which 'channel' NU's aspirations was a clear reference to PKB, and in the conference proceedings, delegates spoke openly about the need for closer ties between the two organisations. Some argued that PKB would only lift its electoral performance if it were more tightly identified with NU; others felt that NU needed to take a greater role in directing PKB, particularly to ensure that political spoils flowed to NU members. This formulation of words further stretched the meaning of *khittah* and took NU nearer to a direct political role.

Ironically, as NU sought to tighten its grip on PKB, relations with the party deteriorated and NU's influence became more tenuous. The main cause was a falling out between Abdurrahman Wahid, the dominant figure within PKB, and senior NU leaders and *ulama*, over the direction of the party and its senior appointments. Abdurrahman and his loyalists within

PKB repeatedly ignored NU's wishes regarding legislative and gubernatorial candidates as well as appointments to executive positions in the party. Tensions between NU and PKB worsened in the run-up to the 2004 Presidential Election. NU's current chairman, KH Hasyim Muzadi, became Megawati's vice-presidential running mate in the Presidential Election, standing down from 'active duty' in PBNU for the campaign period but resuming his responsibilities immediately after his electoral defeat was evident. Abdurrahman's brother, Solahuddin Wahid, who was also a PBNU deputy chairman, stood as the running mate of Golkar's presidential candidate, retired general Wiranto. Abdurrahman and a number of NU intellectuals criticised Hasyim's and Solahuddin's nominations as contrary to the *khittah*. Abdurrahman himself stood as PKB's presidential candidate until excluded from the campaign on health grounds by the Election Commission. Following the presidential election, NU's 2004 Congress in Boyolali strengthened the rules relating to the *khittah* and political neutrality. The 'control parties' clause from the preceding congress was removed and stipulations preventing NU leaders from holding party positions were tightened.²³

At the branch level across Indonesia, large numbers of NU leaders continue to hold simultaneously NU and political office. In NU's East Java heartland, for example, estimates of the number of NU leaders 'doubling up' range from 40 per cent to 60 per cent. This figure is only slightly lower in Central Java and is probably higher in the Outer Islands.²⁴ NU *ulama* and branch members happily tolerate this situation because of the benefits which a politically well-connected NU executive member can bring.

Returning to 1952?

The foregoing analysis has sought to show that NU's *khittah* was much less 'progressive' and reformist than it appeared at first glance. It also was less embedded in NU culture than its proponents would have had us believe. The *khittah* was primarily a strategy for NU to escape the ever more onerous restrictions placed upon it by the New Order regime. The concept was both broad in implication and vague in its possible application. It allowed NU's intellectually restless and frustrated younger cadre the space to develop and express new ideas on a wide range of issues, but it also permitted politically active members alternative means for pursuing their ambitions. Parts of the *khittah*-related agenda have proved of lasting significance. NU's commitment to pluralism and tolerance, long a feature of the organisation, was deepened and given intellectual heft. Innovative religious thinking among reformers led to new and more flexible interpretations of Islamic law, enabling NU to respond more quickly and creatively to changing social conditions. But many other aspects of the broader *khittah* agenda were of limited or ephemeral impact, leaving key features of NU substantially unchanged. Thus, rather than seeing the period since the early 1980s as a fundamental and immutable shift in NU's direction, it should

more accurately be viewed as an historical anomaly produced by a specific set of political circumstances. Regime oppression had driven NU to embrace new approaches to politics and socio-religious affairs, but the main game for most *nahdliyin* continued to be securing of interests. The speed with which NU changed position in the post-Soeharto period attested to its underlying pragmatism.

Nor was *khittah*, in any substantive sense, a return to the ‘purity’ of NU’s original struggle in the 1920s. The preoccupation with acquiring power and material advancement have more in common with NU’s period of ‘high politics’ in the 1950s and 1960s, than with the apolitical 1920s. This is apparent from NU’s current leadership and intellectual environment. Hasyim Muzadi (see Figure 10.1), who replaced Abdurrahman as NU chairman in 1999, has been a lacklustre leader who has little of his predecessor’s vision or flair, though he is a more able administrator. He has, however, taken NU back to the style of leadership practised by Idham Chalid, NU’s chairman from 1956 to 1984, which is based primarily upon assiduous cultivation of provincial and branch leaders. He is tireless in visiting NU branches and diligently dispenses facilities and funds. In short, he is an old-style patronage politician with little of interest to impart on reform



Figure 10.1 Nahdlatul Ulama’s chairman, Hasyim Muzadi and president, K.H. Sahal Mahfudh at the 2006 mid-term conference of NU in Surabaya.

or liberalisation. His comprehensive re-election as Chairman in 2004 shows where NU's priorities lay.

Perhaps more importantly for NU, much of the intellectual ferment and innovation of the 1980s and 1990s has now disappeared from the organisation's internal discourse. Many of the leading thinkers from that period are now active in politics and business and play little role in promoting 'progressive' ideas. For example, Said Aqil Siradj, once an outspoken and consistently thought-provoking NU religious scholar, is now immersed in business and former president Megawati Sukarnoputri's political team, and rarely appears at NGO or academic fora. Dr Mohammad Hikam, formerly a prominent commentator and liberal-minded intellectual, is now a PKB parliamentarian and until recently a political enforcer for Abdurrahman.

Overall, NU has not lived up to the optimistic predictions made for it one or two decades ago. It is an important voice for moderation in Indonesian Islam and a major player in socio-political affairs, but it is not, as an institution, a major force for reform or religious and social liberalisation in the post-Soeharto era.

Notes

- 1 See, for example, G. Barton, *Gus Dur: The Authorized Biography of Abdurrahman Wahid*, Jakarta: Equinox, 2003; R. Hefner, *Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000; D. Ramage, *Politics in Indonesia: Democracy, Islam and the Ideology of Tolerance*, London: Routledge, 1995; and G. Fealy, 'The 1994 NU Congress and Aftermath: Abdurrahman Wahid, Suksesi and the Battle for Control in NU', in G. Barton and G. Fealy (eds), *Nahdlatul Ulama, Traditional Islam and Modernity in Indonesia*, Clayton, Victoria: Monash Asia Institute, 1996.
- 2 KH denotes *kiai* (religious scholar and teacher) and *haji* (a Muslim who has undertaken the pilgrimage to Mecca).
- 3 Despite the frequency with which the *khittah* 1926 was invoked, there remains little explicit historical documentation regarding NU's founding principles, apart from what was contained in the inaugural constitution and organisational rules. Indeed, surprisingly little scholarly research has been carried out into NU's early years, which may well have been felicitous for NU reformers in the 1980s. Van Bruinessen has argued persuasively that the *khittah* proponents were not so much reviving a detailed earlier manifesto as constructing a tradition to serve contemporary needs. See M. van Bruinessen, 'Traditions for the Future: The Reconstruction of Traditionalist Discourse within NU', in G. Barton and G. Fealy, *Nahdlatul Ulama*, pp. 163–89.
- 4 For a comprehensive account of NU during the 1980s and early 1990s, see M. van Bruinessen, *NU, Tradisi, Relasi-relasi Kuasa dan Pencarian Wacana Baru*, Yogyakarta: LKiS, 1994.
- 5 The seminal text was Achmad Siddiq's *Khitthah Nahdliyah*, Surabaya: Balai Buku, 1979, though his *Pedoman Berfikir Nahdlatul Ulama*, Jember: Cabang PMII Jember, 1969, was the first work to set out his ideas on NU's religious and political thinking.
- 6 M. van Bruinessen, 'The Nahdlatul Ulama in the 1980s: Withdrawal from Politics, Factional Conflict, and the Search for a New Discourse', unpublished manuscript.

- 7 Pengurus Besar Nahdlatul Ulama, *Hasil Muktamar Nahdlatul Ulama ke 27, Situbondo: Kembali ke Khittah Perjuangan 1926*, Semarang: Sumber Barokah, p. 42.
- 8 Ibid, p. 138–9.
- 9 Ibid, p. 139.
- 10 Interview with Abdurrahman Wahid, Jakarta, February 1992.
- 11 For details on this, see Kacung Marijan, *Quo Vadis NU: Setelah Kembali ke Khittah 1926*, Jakarta: Penerbit Erlangga, 1992, pp. 157–94.
- 12 Pengurus Besar Nahdlatul Ulama, *Hasil-Hasil Muktamar Nahdlatul Ulama ke 28 di Pondok Pesantren al-Munawwir, Krapyak, Yogyakarta, 25–28 Nopember 1989*, Jakarta: PBNU, 1990, p. 180.
- 13 *Keputusan Munas Alim Ulama dan Konbes Nahdlatul-Ulama di Bandarlampung*, Semarang: Lajnah Ta'lif Wanasyr PBNU and Sumber Barokah, 1992, p. 161.
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 Aside from PKB, the other newly formed *nahdliyin* parties were: SUNY (Partai Solidaritas Umat Indonesia [Indonesian Islamic Community Solidarity Party]); PNU (Partai Nahdlatul Umat [Islamic Community Awakening Party]); and PKU (Partai Kebangkitan Umat [Islamic Community Revival Party]). PKB was formed on 23 July 1998 under the chairmanship of the former PPP parliamentarian Matori Abdul Jalil. The SUNY party was formed four days later by Abu Hasan, who had challenged Abdurrahman for the chairmanship at the 1994 congress and later established a rival NU board. PNU was founded on 16 August by the popular Jakarta *ulama* and preacher, Syukron Makmun and PKU was established on 23 September by Abdurrahman's uncle and long-term opponent, KH Yusuf Hasyim. In addition to this, PPP retained significant support among sections of the NU community, particularly in the Outer Islands.
- 16 See, for example, *Republika*, *Kompas*, and *Jawa Pos*, 29 April 1999.
- 17 'Partai Warga NU Perlu Pertimbangan Matang,' *Kompas Online*, 8 June 1998. Available at <http://www.kompas.com> (accessed 9 June 1998).
- 18 Quoted in 'Setelah "Nunut Urip," Berdirilah PKB,' *UmmatOnline*, 15 August 1998, Available at <http://www.ummata.com.pk> (accessed 18 August 1998).
- 19 'Selama ini Anggota NU Dalam Posisi Terjajah,' *Tempo Interaktif*, 13 June 1998.
- 20 'PKB Tolak Gagasan Negara Federal,' *Suara Merdeka*, 19 September 1998.
- 21 See *Hasil-Hasil Muktamar Nahdlatul Ulama ke-28 di Pondok Pesantren al Munawwir, Krapyak, Yogyakarta, 25–28 Nopember 1989*, Jakarta: Pengurus Besar Nahdlatul Ulama, 1989, pp. 181–2. The Nine Guidelines set out general principles by which NU members should exercise their political rights.
- 22 *Hasil-Hasil Muktamar XXX Nahdlatul Ulama, 21–26 Nopember 1999, di Pondok Pesantren Hidayatul Muhtadi'in Lirboyo Kediri, Jawa Timur*, Jakarta: Sekretariat Jenderal Pengurus Besar Nahdlatul Ulama, 2000, p. 70.
- 23 'Lima Agenda NU,' *Suara Merdeka*, 3 December 2004; and 'NU Breaks Alliance with PKB,' *The Jakarta Post*, 4 December 2004.
- 24 Interviews with NU activists and officials, Jakarta and Surabaya, February 2005.

11 Political Islam in Malaysia

Legitimacy, hegemony and resistance

Joseph Chinyong Liow

‘You don’t allow people to question rules or opinions or institutions, you eliminate the very habit of questioning as subversive’

Isaiah Berlin

Introduction

The role of Islam in the shaping of politics in contemporary Muslim states has assumed greater significance in recent times. Additionally, developments taking place across Muslim-dominated societies outside the immediate Islamic heartland of the Middle East have garnered increasing attention in scholarship as well as the media. Over the past two decades, Islam has exercised a mounting and significant influence on the Malaysian political terrain, blurring the boundaries between religion and politics in the process. This phenomenon has been captured most profoundly in what has come to be known as the ‘Islamisation race’ – the struggle between UMNO (United Malay National Organisation) and PAS (Party Islam se-Malaysia) to capture the pivotal vote of the Malay-Muslim community, which constitutes almost 60 per cent of the Malaysian population.

Beyond the intricacies of this contest however, the impact of Islamisation on Malaysian politics, epitomised not only in the increasingly frequent mobilisation of Islamic metaphors and idioms by both Malay-Muslim parties as sources of legitimacy but also by the creeping influence that religious institutions have come to exercise in state power and Malaysian social life, runs deep, cutting across ethnic and class divides in the process. This chapter seeks to illuminate the origins, shape and trajectory of Muslim politics in Malaysia by exploring its dialectical and discursive markers over the past twenty years, including prominent Muslim civil-society groups that have attempted to transcend party politics in order to exercise some measure of influence from the political margins, as well as the politics, policies and mechanisms that have flowed from them. In essence, the chapter argues that the intensification of this process of Islamisation, the unremitting mobilisation of religion as a basis of political legitimacy and the facilitation

of the emergence of Islam as a hegemonic force in Malaysian politics over the past two decades has generated cross-currents and deepened cleavages beyond the confines of partisan politics, imperils the pluralism upon which Malaysian society is built, and threatens the nascent trajectory of democratisation in Malaysia.

Religious contours of Malay politics

The centrality of Islam in modern Malaysian politics has already been stressed on numerous occasions in the extant literature.¹ These works generally trace the process of Islamisation back to the advent of the Mahathir Administration, which roughly coincided with fundamental changes in the orientation of the Islamic opposition. Others would however trace the process of Islamisation further back to developments immediately following the May 1969 race riots, which revealed the flaws of the secular and pluralistic model of national development and government. Consequently, the 1970s saw Muslim society evolve along two tracks: the first along the UMNO-orchestrated and PAS-supported lines of economic restructuring and affirmative action, and the second was a path of Islamisation that capitalised on the global Islamic revival and took the form of non-governmental activist pressure groups such as ABIM (Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia). Be that as it may, it was with the transition in the complexion of PAS leadership and UMNO's concomitant response that the process of Islamisation found substantive institutional expression.

PAS has long been the primary Malay-based opposition in Malaysian politics. As a political party, PAS was ironically born within UMNO itself, when members of the Religious Bureau of UMNO called into question the commitment of the party's leadership to Islam and Muslim interest and broke away in 1951.² Regardless of the party's overtly religious character and motivation, however, its track record in Malaysian politics is certainly more chequered.³ Through the 1950s and 1960s, the party under the leadership of the Muslim-socialist intellectual Dr Burhanuddin al-Helmy lined up as an Islamo-socialist party. After the May 1969 race riots, PAS, under Muhammad Asri Muda, moved further right of the ideological spectrum and transformed into a Malay-nationalist party that contested UMNO's claim to leadership of the Malay community against the backdrop of heightened communitarian consciousness. Subsequently, the period from 1974 to 1977 saw PAS join UMNO in the Barisan Nasional coalition in an ill-fated attempt at conciliation. Membership in the Barisan, in fact, set in train political events that eventually led to the loss of its power base in Kelantan for the first time since Independence at the 1978 elections and the subsequent internal coup in the party. At its 1982 *Muktamar*, the party was purged of its old-guard nationalists led by Asri Muda, and brought into power Ulama, led by Yusoff Rawa and a core group comprising of Fadzil Noor, Nakhaie Ahmad, Abdul Hadi Awang and Muhammad Sabu, who were

bent on returning Islam to the party's political agenda.⁴ Of course, the reorientation of PAS in 1982 cannot be attributed solely to the failure of Asri Muda's strategy of allying the party with UMNO. The early 1980s witnessed key global events in the Muslim world that not only informed this reorientation in PAS, but as it turns out, in UMNO as well. This included the Afghan *Mujahidin* struggle, the Iranian revolution, the introduction of Islamic government in Pakistan, intensification of Islamism in the political realm in Egypt, Tunisia and Turkey and the general Islamic resurgence that had begun about a decade earlier.

It would be wrong to suggest that it was only in the 1980s that Islam emerged as a factor in Malay politics, since UMNO had from very early on been regularly pressured to prove its Islamic credentials by opposition forces and responded with the creation of institutions such as PERKIM (Islamic Welfare Organisation or Persatuan Kebajikan Islam Malaysia). Nevertheless, it was in the 1980s that the logic of Islamic governance became more sharply defined and Islamic influence expanded. Mahathir, who had taken over from the ailing Hussein Onn as Malaysia's fourth Prime Minister in July 1981, was quick to anticipate the challenges posed to the ruling administration by international and domestic developments, and his response was both swift and penetrating. The Mahathir administration sought to seize the initiative by harnessing and mobilising Islam to justify its developmental policies. It did so by orchestrating an Islamisation process that found expression in the host of Islamic-oriented institutions that flowed from this policy. Indeed, as Virginia Hooker observed in her analysis of the role of Islam in Mahathir's Vision 2020 rhetoric, 'The government's advocacy of "Islam" is however, focussed specifically on an expression of Islam which will support and complement its political aims of an industrialised and unified nation.'⁵ This stood in marked contrast at the time to developments elsewhere in the Muslim world where regimes experiencing similar pressures from Islamist opposition forces, such as Egypt and Turkey, chose to discredit, rather than co-opt, the Islamist agenda.

Key elements of Mahathir's Islamisation programme included the creation of a religious bureaucracy under the auspices of the state, Islamic courts, Islamic banking and financial systems and Islamic education, including a tertiary institution, the International Islamic University. An important initiative under the Mahathir Administration was the creation of several think tanks and research institutes which contributed to the articulation, elucidation and exposition of the Government's Islamisation project: IKIM (Malaysian Institute for Islamic Understanding), ISTAC (Institute for Islamic Thought and Civilisation) and, in the case of former deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, IKD (Institute Kajian Dasar or Institute of Policy Studies). (Among other things, this served also to generate many of Anwar's ideas on modernist/progressive Islam. As this paper will later show, Anwar employed these ideas to great success during his tenure as DPM.)

They played a crucial role in establishing the Government's terms of Islamist discourse, praxis and ideology. Of particular significance was the creation of state religious committees which were granted powers to police and monitor the content and expression of Islam. At the governmental level, an Islamic department, JAKIM (Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia or Department for the Advancement of Islam) was established under the auspices of the Prime Minister's Office, equipped with its own minister and secretariat. State religious departments enjoy powers of appointment for imams and mosque committees and, by that token, perpetuate incumbent rule through the selection of UMNO supporters to assume these positions. On the other hand, known opposition activists in these positions have been removed, as was the recent case with the Imam of the Damansara Utama Mujahidin Mosque. Sermons (*Khutbah*), too, are prepared by the state religious departments and distributed to all the mosques in the state.

This shift in government policy was further mirrored in the foreign policy of the Mahathir Administration, where Malaysia began taking an active interest in Arab-Muslim affairs and positioned itself as the international spokesman of the Muslim world.⁶ Perhaps the most significant component of the Mahathir Government's Islamisation strategy was the successful co-option of Anwar Ibrahim. Then an active leader of the youth movement ABIM, Anwar was courted both by UMNO and PAS. However, it was Mahathir who ultimately masterminded the co-option of Anwar. In him, the ruling regime found not only a popular leader with strong Islamist credentials but also, more importantly, a key ideologue who could convincingly articulate a comprehensive Islamisation programme that mapped out the trajectory of political Islam in Malaysia.

Needless to say, several consequences flowed from the Mahathir Administration's Islamisation strategy. On a positive note, Malaysia has become the model of an 'Islamic state' par excellence in the eyes of the West. This fact takes on even greater precedence given present-day politico-strategic realities that see Islam increasingly being pressured to prove propinquity and concord with Western conceptions of modernisation and development. On the other hand, by opting to take the Islamist PAS head-on in their own game, the Mahathir Administration effectively contributed to the narrowing of political space in Malaysia which, given the pluralistic contours and patterns of Malaysian society, threatened to curtail democratic discourse and alienate Malaysia's large non-Muslim population. It is to this state of affairs that the paper now turns.

Dialectics of Islamisation

In reaction to the changes in PAS after the 1982 *Muktamar*, the corresponding UMNO General Assembly saw Mahathir announce that UMNO would be embarking on a new strategy focused on 'the struggle to change the attitude of the Malays in line with the requirements of Islam in this

modern age.⁷ This logic subsequently underpinned his introduction of a policy of *Penerapan Nilai-nilai Islam* (inculcation of Islamic values). Put differently, the long-standing objective of improving the lot of the Malay community was repackaged as an objective sanctioned by, and to be pursued in reference to, Islam. As alluded to earlier, Mahathir's vision of Islam however, was one that was couched in developmentalist language, and his claim to 'authenticity' was based on his argument that there is no tension between modernisation and religion in 'true Islam'. He noted, for instance, that it was only by accepting the pursuit of knowledge and advancement of technology that Muslims can 'sincerely try to regain the essence of Islam that so inspired the early Muslims so that not only did they manage to spread the teachings far and wide but they brought greatness to Islam in the fields of human endeavour.'⁸ For Mahathir, Islam sat comfortably with modernity and material progress. Following this train of thought, PAS was correspondingly caricatured as the mirror opposite – obscurantist in their ideology, backward in their outlook and fundamentally opposed to progress. In other words, PAS exemplified all which Mahathir saw wrong with Islam today. Yet, in so far as PAS was concerned, Islam provided a trenchant counter-narrative to modernisation as defined by the Government, which, to their mind, created a whole myriad of social problems for the Muslim community. The Islamisation strategy of the Mahathir Administration was criticised and delegitimised as nothing more than an instrumental manipulation of religion.

A major feature on the heavily contested discursive terrain of Muslim politics has been the debate over Malaysia's characterisation as an Islamic state, as well as the conceptual and practical blueprints that both UMNO and PAS put forth for Malaysia as an Islamic state.⁹ While Mahathir had on previous occasions during his long tenure described Malaysia as an 'Islamic country', his pronouncement on 29 September 2001 that Malaysia 'was already an Islamic state' marked a fundamental watershed in Islamic politics that sparked an intense national debate and further demonstrated the centrality of Islam in the Malaysian political orbit.

At first glance, Mahathir's declaration does appear to have fulfilled a key political objective – to pre-empt PAS and seize the initiative for UMNO. The claim that Malaysia was already an Islamic state, however, needs to be viewed in context. First, this 'Islamic state' that Mahathir imputed to Malaysia, was essentially a construction of his own administration and a logical outgrowth of his Islamisation program over the past two decades. In tandem with the general inconsistent tendencies of UMNO Islamisation, in hindsight it does not appear to have survived its progenitor's retirement and has since been supplanted by Abdullah Badawi's more palatable but equally complex concept of *Islam Hadhari*. Second, Mahathir's logic, as many Islamic scholars were quick to point out, was fundamentally flawed. While Mahathir maintained that Malaysia could be an Islamic state without the implementation of Islamic law, this contention goes against the

grain of most theories of the Islamic state. For all its vagaries, there is general consensus that *syariah*, of which Islamic law is constitutive, is the definitive characteristic of an Islamic state. To that effect, the Islamists could contend, rightly so in accordance to Islamic political philosophy, that Mahathir's pronouncement was groundless and inconsistent, and exemplified the baseless mobilisation of religion for political ends. Finally, as with much of the problem with the ongoing discourse of Islamisation in Malaysia, Mahathir's statement threatened to push Malaysia further down the road of Islamisation and alienate Malaysia's substantial non-Muslim minorities.

PAS's Islamic State Document was released on 12 November 2003 and presented as the highpoint of the party's struggle to entrench its position in its core electoral base of the Malay-Muslim community by emphasising its Islamic credentials.¹⁰ The document attempted to reconcile the need for shariah in Malaysia with provisions for greater democracy under the auspices of an Islamic state, while attempting to allay non-Muslim fears that an Islamic state in Malaysia would be a theocracy and assuring them of religious and cultural freedoms and the option to live under Islamic criminal laws or the current secular constitutional system. Beneath the rhetoric, however, was a realisation that the document was urgently required to counter the religious standing that Abdullah Badawi had injected into UMNO.

The urgency behind the launch of the document in fact had the paradoxical effect of drawing attention to the weaknesses of the problematic conceptualisation by PAS of a democratic Malaysian Islamic state and the leadership's inability to fend off opposition to and criticism of the document, including those from partners in the Barisan Alternatif opposition alliance. This, in turn, amplified the differences that percolated within the party between so-called moderates and hardliners who were clearly behind the sanction of the document. The general response to the release of their blueprint, particularly in reaction to specific points such as its inability to convincingly reconcile commitment to both the UN Human Rights Declaration and *syariah*, to the document itself and the Federal Constitution (which PAS has declared its commitment to), or to the jurisprudential methodology which would be used to oversee the implementation of *syariah*, has demonstrated not only that the PAS leadership has not managed to win over doubters, but also that the party itself has not been able to cobble together an unambiguous and convincing response to some very rudimentary issues at stake.¹¹ If anything, the release of the Islamic state blueprint was a tactical error of sorts that proved costly for PAS ambitions to further broaden its appeal in Malaysia.

This discursive debate, which continues in earnest today, speaks to the inflation of Islamist discourse by both parties and underscores an increasingly tense rivalry over the form and content of Islam in the Malaysian political sphere. Unlike previous UMNO-led administrations that roundly reject the notion of the Islamic state, UMNO under Mahathir has appropriated PAS discourse on it. No doubt differences between UMNO and

PAS took shape over the manner in which both negotiated the conceptual boundaries of the Islamic state, and neither conception is without inherent problems in its own structural logic. This has, however, not stopped either UMNO or PAS from employing the language of religion to serve their political objectives of discrediting and undermining each other by presenting Islamo-politics in Malaysia as a Manichean arena where Islam serves to legitimise self and delegitimise the other.

To be sure, beyond the Islamic state, this Islamisation process has generated concepts more palatable to Malaysia's pluralistic society and more amenable to democracy and reform. In 1996, then deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim sought to capitalise on the overall heightened Muslim consciousness as well as his own personal popularity by manufacturing a new and catchy organising principle for a plural society based on Islamic precepts of democracy, good governance, inclusivity and civil relations between ethnic groups, which proposed to fundamentally restructure Malaysia's hitherto communally oriented national consciousness. The catchphrase '*Masyarakat Madani*' (Civil Society) was contrived to define such a society. The concept was presented as a polity where Allah had endowed rights to individuals that were to be recognised, respected and, in so far as the state was concerned, protected, and where democratic principles were to be enshrined. As Anwar himself articulated, 'only the fostering of a genuine civil society or *Masyarakat Madani*, a critical component to the establishment of democracy, can assure the path of sustained growth including economic, social, and political.'¹² The concept of *Masyarakat Madani*, as Anwar imagined it, was anchored by the notion of *Keadilan Sosial* or social justice. Through the efforts of his *Institut Kajian Dasar*, *Masyarakat Madani* and *Keadilan Sosial*, and Anwar's attendant call for inter-civilisational dialogue that underpinned his 1996 compendium of speeches titled *Asian Renaissance*, soon became the focus of trendy intellectualism as road shows, seminars and conferences were held throughout the country to promote the concept and reach out across ethnic and class schisms.

On the one hand, sceptics would view *Masyarakat Madani* merely as a manifestation of Anwar's ambition and the particular brand of leadership that he personified to the Malaysian people in preparation for an eventual leadership succession. After all, Anwar was, at the time, slated to be Mahathir's successor and was building on his reputation as an activist and modernist Muslim leader garnered during his ABIM days, and which later saw him emerge as a popular Muslim intellectual, Chancellor of the International Islamic University and the personification of all that was progressive and modern about the Government's Islamisation programme. Moreover, Anwar himself was known to have been an avid follower of the teachings of Yusuf Qaradawi, the Dean of Islamic Law at Qatar University who popularised the application of *Al Halal wal Haram fil Islam* (the lawful and prohibited acts in Islam) principle as the basis of Islamic legal scholarship

and who is generally associated with a narrow approach to Islam and the Islamic state that focuses on punitive sanctions.¹³

Even so, beneath the instrumentality of the initiative were certain ideas that sought to transcend the communal structure of society and politics in Malaysia. Concepts such as democracy and human rights, long rejected (when articulated in relation to Western 'understanding' of such ideas) by the Malaysian establishment under Mahathir, stood then at the forefront of discourse on the future of the Malaysian polity. *Masyarakat Madani*, however, appeared to have died a premature death with Anwar's removal from office. Tellingly though, amidst the current interest in Abdullah Badawi's seemingly congruent concept of *Islam Hadhari*, *Masyarakat Madani* appears to have been revived. On 9 January 2005, a seminar was organised at the Village Hotel in Petaling Jaya, outside Kuala Lumpur, titled '*Mahasiswa dan Masyarakat Madani*.' The guest speaker at the seminar was none other than Anwar Ibrahim, who remarkably had his conviction overturned by the Appeals Court and was released from prison several months earlier.

Abdullah Badawi's Islam: continuities and discontinuities

The *Barisan Nasional*'s landslide victory at the 2004 Malaysian General Elections held in March was greeted with accolades by the international media and analysts and proclaimed to signal the roll-back of Islamism and the resurgence of moderation and secularism in the crucial arena of Malay politics in Malaysia.¹⁴ This 'mandate for moderation', as the election result was called by CNN, was celebrated as 'a good precedent for the Muslim world.' Closer to home, the Singapore news medium Channel NewsAsia opined that the election results were 'an overwhelming mandate for its (UMNO's) secular rule in one of the world's most developed Muslim states.'¹⁵ Elsewhere, it was reported that:

Abdullah Badawi handed the fundamentalist Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party, or PAS, one of its worst-ever defeats in last week's elections by touting a modern, progressive Islam. His ruling coalition now controls 11 of the country's 12 states, and seems to have quashed the idea that radical Islam was infiltrating the politics of Southeast Asia.¹⁶

Two things are immediately clear from these depictions of the Barisan's victory: first, many observers viewed Islam as the major factor in the elections; and, second, UMNO's brand of 'progressive' Islam clearly triumphed over the 'fundamentalist' opposition.

Barisan Nasional's success was primarily attributed to the Abdullah Administration's successful co-optation of the *Reformasi* language and agenda of pluralism, openness and reform. The cause however, was also undoubtedly assisted by the introduction of prominent candidates and televangelists with strong Islamic credentials on the Barisan ticket.¹⁷ These included

Pirdaus Ismail, former Imam of the national mosque, and Dr Mashitah Ibrahim, a young university lecturer and television personality.

Despite UMNO attempts at outflanking PAS with its own slate of Islamic leaders and the fact that the Islamist opposition subsequently lost of twenty-one parliamentary and sixty-two state seats, popular support for the Islamist opposition actually increased from 15 per cent in 1999 to 15.6 per cent. This statistic certainly contradicted proclamations of a 'scaling back' of the PAS tide.¹⁸

Islam Hadhari: Islamisation by other means?

The latest permutation of UMNO's Islamist discourse took the form of the notion of *Islam Hadhari* (Islamic civilisation) propounded by the new administration and made a major campaign platform at the 2004 General Election. Borne out of a committee which comprised Nakhaie Ahmad (a former *ulama* stalwart of PAS who defected to UMNO), Mustapha Mohamed (Kelantan UMNO liaison chief) and Abdul Hamid Othman (former Minister in Charge of Islamic Affairs) and tasked to Abdullah Zin, Minister in the Prime Minister's Office, to implement, *Islam Hadhari* was an adaptation of the thought of Ibn Khaldun, the fourteenth-century Muslim historian and sociologist and is made up of ten lofty principles:

1. Faith and piety in Allah.
2. A just and trustworthy government.
3. A free and independent people.
4. Mastery of knowledge.
5. Balanced and comprehensive economic development.
6. A good quality of life.
7. Protection of the rights of minority groups and women.
8. Cultural and moral integrity.
9. Protection of the environment.
10. Strong defence capabilities.

While the term was bandied about on the campaign trail, it was only at the UMNO General Assembly on 23 September 2004 that Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi articulated in greater detail his vision of *Islam Hadhari* for Malaysia. Predictably, the concept was contextualised against the backdrop of the Malay community's struggle for independence and development. Briefly, *Islam Hadhari* emphasised the enhancement of 'the quality of life' through acquisition of knowledge, development of the individual and the nation and the establishment of a dynamic economic, trading and financial system. To Abdullah's mind, such a balanced development would produce an *umma* or community of knowledgeable and pious people with noble values like honesty and trustworthiness and who would be able to take on challenges of modernisation without compromising religious belief

and praxis. *Islam Hadhari*, as later explained in a sixty-page document drafted by JAKIM and published by the Government, further emphasised the central role of knowledge in Islam along with hard work, honesty, good administration and efficiency and an appeal to Muslims to be tolerant and outward-looking. Committees have since been established to spread the message throughout Malaysia, and (UMNO) imams have been instructed to preach it during Friday sermons. The Yayasan Islam Hadhari (Islam Hadhari Foundation) was subsequently established under the patronage of the Prime Minister to further articulate the meaning of the concept.

The concept of *Islam Hadhari* has been touted as a major instrument of reform initiated by the Abdullah Administration, and it has enhanced Malaysia's prestige as the pre-eminent moderate and progressive Muslim state. Its relation to broader and deeper processes of Islamisation, however, demands closer scrutiny. *Islam Hadhari* functions at the level of elite politics. It operates as a top-down phenomenon where, not unlike his predecessor, Abdullah has attempted to carry Malay-Muslims past the threshold into modernity. Be that as it may, there are several flaws in the logic of *Islam Hadhari* that will fundamentally hamper its efficacy as an organising principle for 'progressive' Muslim politics in Malaysia, the politically motivated criticisms made of it by PAS notwithstanding. First, the concept of *Islam Hadhari* has not managed to reconcile a fundamental dichotomy of politics in plural Malaysia – the question of Malay (Muslim) primacy. Instead, it demonstrates the intensification of the process of Islamisation that has captivated Malay-Muslim politicians, and to which Abdullah Badawi is not immune. As Farish Noor presciently observed, 'to suggest that race can be the basis of politics, or more bizarre still the politics of *Islam Hadhari*, is a contradiction as embarrassing as a socialist party trying to promote capitalism.'¹⁹ Indeed, while lip-service was paid to the protection of 'rights of minority groups' by the champions of *Islam Hadhari*, the baggage of race and communalism threatens to weigh it down. This was evident from the very fact that at Abdullah's 2004 UMNO General Assembly speech, which could be viewed as the major policy statement of *Islam Hadhari*, the concept was intimately related to the Malay community's struggle for independence and development. More recently, at the 2005 UMNO General Assembly, the 'lessons' of *Islam Hadhari* all but faded into the background as the spectre of racial politics was raised yet again when some UMNO Youth leaders reminded non-Malays that they were recipients of Malay-Muslim goodwill that permitted them to *Menumpang* (temporarily reside) on Malaysian soil and others called for the reinstatement of the thirty-year-old New Economic Policy.

Second, the notions of democracy and human rights are conspicuously absent from the exposition of *Islam Hadhari*. Malaysian observers have been quick to note that *Islam Hadhari*, as it has been presented thus far, remains silent on immediate pressing issues such as civil liberties, human rights and corruption;²⁰ nor has *Islam Hadhari* much to say about the

constant policing of Islamic discourse and praxis in Malaysia that has caused much consternation for both Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

Finally, while most, including non-Muslims, will have little to quibble about over the principles underlying *Islam Hadhari* as articulated by Abdullah, fundamental questions remain over the matter of operationalisation. The Government still lacks a clear strategy of implementation. Certainly, it appears that these ambiguities and anomalies speak of a 'work in progress' rather than an ideological or operational blueprint for the reorganisation of Malay-Muslim politics. In sum, while one is tempted to perceive *Islam Hadhari* as a new phenomenon on the Malaysian social-political landscape, doing so would be to miss a very important point. At the heart of *Islam Hadhari*, as its progenitor Abdullah himself has claimed on numerous occasions, is attitudinal change. *Islam Hadhari* is an attempt to inspire a shift in outlook and worldview on the part of the Malay-Muslim population that would, in turn, spur them to greater, principled economic and scientific achievements. In other words, in order to thrust his Malaysia forward, Abdullah has taken a step back to the ideas of Ibn Khaldun and al-Ghazzali al-Tusi (1058–1111). Yet, for those who have been following Malaysian politics, this is not unlike what Dr Mahathir Mohamad had sought to accomplish for the better part of his twenty-two-year tenure as Prime Minister and UMNO President, albeit without the allusions to Islamic philosophers of the past.

And the Islamisation wagon rolls on

The process of Islamisation has had the further effect of blurring the lines of political allegiances. Intra-Malay politics was traditionally defined by class boundaries. The rural electorate commonly filed behind PAS, while educators, civil servants and later the urban middle-class supported UMNO.²¹ This no longer seems to be the case. In recent times, a major PAS initiative has been the integration of members of the Western-educated middle class into its ranks, evident in the profile of its Central Committee, while UMNO has responded to accusations that it had lost sight of its traditional nationalist-populist ideals and transformed into a corrupt party of business interests by reaching out to rural Malay constituencies through a range of grassroots programmes.²² This apparent convergence of popular outlooks highlight the profound irony of contemporary Muslim politics in Malaysia today, where the vitriolic nature and character of UMNO–PAS interaction belies the fact that the politics and policies of both parties are ultimately much more proximate than either set of leaders would care to admit.

Elite Malay politics in Malaysia have, in recent times, been increasingly defined by the polemics between UMNO and PAS as leaders of both parties have sought to delegitimise each other by drawing into question their opponent's misrepresentations of Islam and concurrently legitimise their

own political agenda with references to Islamic idioms and motifs. Prima facie, a clear delineation of boundaries between UMNO and PAS, in which the former are viewed as moderates and progressives while the latter, as fundamentalist champions of the Islamic state, appears to have materialised from this state of affairs.²³ Herein lies a fundamental contradiction: in truth, these boundaries, and the politico-religious culture that underpins them, are much more ambiguous and fluid. This incongruence is due largely to the surfacing of institutional structures which have blurred the lines between religion and state and whose role appears increasingly to be to police the discourse and normative exercise of Islam. In fact, the enactment and implementation of narrow policies by UMNO-run state and local governments threaten an even more fundamental and far-reaching politicisation of Islam in Malaysia, where UMNO's active attempts to give institutional expression to a more fundamentalist Islamist ideology in response to the PAS challenge brings the party's policies dangerously close to the narrow conservatism many of its leaders purportedly demonise so vehemently in the discursive arena. At the heart of this lies the bureaucratisation of Islam. Despite concerns expressed by the Malaysian Government about the inordinate number of Islamic studies graduates in Malaysia, for some time now federal and state bureaucracies have followed a policy of preference for applicants with a strong religious background. Knowingly or otherwise, UMNO's bureaucratisation of Islam has, in effect, put in place the infrastructure of an Islamic state run by 'state-sponsored firebrands' and a Muslim intelligentsia sympathetic to the Government. Not surprisingly, this has led to concerns expressed in many quarters that UMNO has paradoxically become 'more PAS than PAS.'²⁴

There are numerous anecdotal and empirical examples of this process. The Malaysian cabinet came close several years ago to enacting a bill to make the study of Islamic civilisations a compulsory component of tertiary education.²⁵ While UMNO-run state governments have not pursued the implementation of *hudud* laws, they have however advanced and implemented Islamic policies that perpetuate perceptions of UMNO's politically driven intensification of the Islamic agenda. This has been an especially trenchant phenomenon at the grass-roots level when one considers state religious organisations and their interpretation and implementation of Islamic legislation. This in turn has created fissures between party rank and file (including *ulama*) engaged in everyday contests with PAS representatives for popular support and members of the UMNO leadership, who have sought to tone down their zeal. An instance of federal-state tension that sparked much interest and controversy was the arrest under the Selangor Islamic Criminal Enactment (1995) of three Malay women for participating in a beauty contest in June 1997. In the aftermath of the arrests, comments by the then Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister calling for caution against extremism among state religious officials in implementing shariah law were publicly rebuffed by Selangor Mufti Ishak Baharom (who subsequently

joined PAS), who opined that 'if we regard everything as extreme, then things will be easier, then no enforcement can be conducted. [...] If something is wrong, it is wrong. If beauty contest is wrong, it is wrong.'²⁶ Of interest also was the fact that a surprisingly large number of Malays supported the actions of the JAIS (Selangor State Religious Department) in detaining the women.²⁷ This incident was merely symptomatic of the increasing importance of Islamic identity among the Malay populace and the political pressures this has exerted, spawning not only a more assertive cultural expression of Islamic consciousness manifested most vividly in the popularity of Islamic dress but also legislation that has impinged upon Muslim and non-Muslim cultural space.²⁸ JAIS was also involved in an earlier incident when its voluntary enforcement body BADAR (Badan Amal Makmur Nahimunkar, which at its height had 1,000 members) gained a notorious reputation as an indiscriminate moral police that randomly broke into houses in Shah Alam in search of couples committing *Khalwat* (being in close proximity) and approached Muslim and non-Muslim couples demanding their identity cards. Indeed, so great was the public outcry against BADAR that the Selangor Government was forced to revoke the authority of this organisation in 1995.²⁹

More recent concerns revolved around the move by elements within UMNO to formulate a faith protection bill (known as the Islamiah Aqidah Protection Bill) in November 2000 legislating against apostasy, similar to a bill passed in June 2000 in the UMNO-controlled state of Perlis.³⁰ This followed on the back of earlier attempts by then PAS deputy President Abdul Hadi Awang to obtain parliamentary passage of a bill making apostasy an offence among Muslims in the federal territory punishable by death. While the UMNO motion was less severe, it was nevertheless again symptomatic of the extent to which it is prepared to go in defending its Islamic credentials against the Islamic party. Such pressures have been clearly illustrated in the cautious approach that the current UMNO-dominated Terengganu state legislative assembly has taken toward *hudud* laws that was formulated by the previous PAS state government, where the current state legislature has deliberately skirted discussion of their repudiation.³¹ Debates have also surfaced over revelations that students in Christian mission schools have been forced to recite Islamic prayers in Penang, as well as increased incidences of Islamic-style checks on non-Muslim social activities in Perak and the closing down of entertainment establishments in Selangor by state authorities. In response to then Prime Minister Mahathir's provocative declaration that Malaysia 'is already an Islamic state', the Selangor State Government had organised a seminar entitled 'Understanding Malaysia as an Islamic State', where UMNO state officials discussed the possibility of constitutional amendments to declare the Qur'an and *sunnah* sources of Federal law.³² More recently, the raid by JAWI (Jabatan Agama Islam Wilayah Persekutuan or Federal Territories Religious Department) officers at a nightspot in Kuala Lumpur that saw about 100 Muslim

patrons detained in a humiliating fashion for 'improper dressing' and 'immoral activities' sparked an outcry among the Muslim population. The JAWI raid of 20 January 2005 was certainly not the first of these instances of moral policing. On the contrary, such raids have taken place on a regular basis, with assistance from the RELA (Volunteer Reserve Corps), on various entertainment outlets and nightspots in Kuala Lumpur. Most Muslims caught are usually charged under Sections 19, 35, and 43 of the shariah Criminal Act (Wilayah Persekutuan) 1997 which forbids Muslims to consume or abet others to consume alcohol and to commit *maksiat* (vice). Often, however, defendants are not informed of the specific offences they have committed.³³ The manner in which the 20 January JAWI raid was carried out has sparked a national debate not only over the methods of moral policing, it has also raised doubts over the very legitimacy of such state-sanctioned policies. In response, the raid was discussed at cabinet level and the Attorney General was assigned to investigate the legality of the raid and to review the powers of religious officers. Despite widespread opposition to the raid, which included Puteri UMNO as well as some cabinet ministers, there was also much support from the Muslim population as well as from within the Government for moral policing. Not surprisingly, PAS has spoken out in support of JAWI. However, the policy of moral policing has also found support from many quarters of the vocal UMNO Youth movement as well as several ministers.³⁴ At the same time as controversy brewed over the conduct of JAWI officers, the Chief Minister of Malacca provoked another outcry when he launched the Pasukan Gerak Khas Belia 4B or 4B Youth Movement with a mandate to spy on Muslim couples and report their activities to state religious authorities.³⁵ Equally alarming are the prospects, alluded to at the launch of the 4B Movement, that such organisations could eventually enlist non-Muslims to police the social activities of their non-Muslim counterparts. This would fly in the face of the numerous assurances made by both UMNO and PAS politicians that non-Muslims in Malaysia are not and will not be subject to shariah law.

Whither pluralism?

Malaysia's substantial non-Muslim population has not been spared the impact of such negative state-sponsored Islamisation initiatives.³⁶ Legislation over the issue of religious proselytisation clearly illustrates this partiality.³⁷ While the Constitution ensures the right of every person to 'profess and practise his religion', only Muslims are allowed to propagate their belief.³⁸ The Malaysian Government has itself actively engaged in *Dakwah* or proselytising to non-Muslims through the establishment of PERKIM. This has included the expansion of Islamic programmes over public radio and television, more stringent legislation controlling the building of non-Muslim religious buildings and the curtailment of land plots for non-Muslim burial sites.³⁹ Subang Jaya Municipal Council issued guidelines demanding the

consent of Muslim neighbours for those who wished to obtain dog licences. A subsequent commentary in the Malaysian Bar Council's bimonthly publication, *Infoline*, on the issue of discrepancies in defining noise pollution (presumably as a consequence of barking dogs), which was one of the Municipal Council's reasons behind the guidelines on dogs, by alluding to the opinion that it was as 'disturbing' to the public as the *Azan* sparked a minor controversy that ended up with a police report being made by a Shah Alam UMNO representative against this 'insult to Islam'.⁴⁰ Similar criticisms launched on private websites against what non-Muslims perceived to be discriminatory policies were met with police reports from UMNO Youth and the threat of action by the police under provisions of the Malaysian Sedition Act. Beyond that, a host of practices draw further attention to the discriminatory practices that have resulted from Malaysia's Islamisation race. For instance, mosques are the only religious buildings that are permitted to be built with government subsidies; approval for licenses for other religious buildings remain difficult to obtain; Muslim civil servants are granted special leave to perform the *Hajj*, yet similar privileges are not extended for civil servants of other religious persuasions for purposes of religious duties and obligations; tithes paid by Muslims are deductible from their income tax, but in the case of other religions these donations are only given tax exemption.

Despite vocal support from more than forty non-governmental organisations for the initiation of inter-faith dialogue and the creation of a statutory Inter-Religious Commission, which would have had as a major *raison d'être* the formulation of a mandate to foster dialogue across religious and cultural boundaries to avoid precisely the sort of friction between Muslims and non-Muslims discussed above, these proposals came to nought when it was stridently opposed by the Malaysian Bar Council's shariah law sub-committee and the Allied Coordinating Committee of Islamic NGOs (ACCIN), among others. The grounds were that 'Muslims generally feel that Islam should not be discussed by non-Muslims', even if policies formulated and implemented by Muslim leaders have a direct and explicit impact on large numbers of non-Muslims.⁴¹ Opposition to the Inter-Faith Commission also appeared to be backed by the highest echelons of UMNO government. Deputy Party President and Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak cautioned against interference with Islamic strictures and praxis by non-Muslims as the Muslim community already had 'relevant bodies to handle matters pertaining to it'.⁴² These misgivings were echoed by Prime Minister Abdullah himself, who opined that such a commission would 'arouse uneasiness among multi-religious Malaysians'.⁴³

Indeed, the essence of popular concern, particularly from the non-Muslim population, is not so much with the introduction of Islamic institutions and practices but the hegemony of Islam in public life in Malaysia and its implications for a plural society.⁴⁴ What is most alarming about the current polarised discursive debates between UMNO and PAS is the fact that it has generated a process whereby the politicisation of Islam has resulted in an ever-narrowing socio-political space available not only to Muslims

uncomfortable with where the UMNO-PAS Islamisation race is heading but also to non-Muslim communities that feel increasingly marginalised to the peripheries of the Malaysian politics. Indeed, given the current atmosphere, there appears little room for non-Muslims to contribute, for instance, to discussions on *Islam Hadhari* or Mahathir's Islamic State declaration or to raise questions and doubts as to the impact of such initiatives on their communities without being accused of 'undermining' Islam and 'challenging' Malay-Muslim rights. One only needs to revisit the oft-cited case of Patricia Martinez, a prominent and knowledgeable non-Muslim scholar of Islam who along with several Muslims was accused by the PUM (Ulama Association of Malaysia) of insulting Islam. The fact that these accusations were endorsed not only by PAS, but also received verbal statements of support from several high-ranking UMNO leaders as well, only serves to add further to the perception that the increasingly Islamised discursive terrain of Malaysian politics has pushed counter-narratives further to the margins.

Renegotiating Islam: counter-narratives and fringe voices

To be certain, there have been alternative voices from within the Malay-Muslim community that have attempted to engage the politics of Islamisation, albeit on different terms.⁴⁵ These have taken the form of civil society movements and *Dakwah* associations looking to expand the contours of religio-political discourse in tandem with processes of democratisation. While there are numerous active Islamic NGOs operating in Malaysia, two of the most important mainstream organisations at the forefront of counter-narratives of Islamisation have been ABIM and SIS (Sisters in Islam).

ABIM has stood out as one of the most influential and well organised of Muslim civil-society groups which has traditionally had an impact on Malay-Muslim politics. Formed in 1971 under the leadership of Anwar Ibrahim, ABIM successfully mobilised modernist Malay-Muslim students as a pressure group during the Razak and Hussein Onn administrations. It demonstrated its power and influence most profoundly in December 1974, when it orchestrated a mass student uprising against the Government's rural development policies, resulting in the arrest and detention of numerous ABIM leaders under the Internal Security Act. Such was the impact of ABIM in the 1970s that the Government amended the Societies Act, the Misuse of Religion Act and the Universities and University Colleges Act to proscribe Muslim civil-society activity. ABIM's key ideological contribution to Islamisation was the introduction of a universalist interpretation of Islam in the 1970s that accommodated Malaysia's pluralistic society. ABIM, for example, was a staunch critique of the Government's affirmative-action NEP (National Economic Policy) on Islamic grounds, and after the movement's retreat from activist pressure politics, upon Anwar's co-option into UMNO, the mantle of Malay-Muslim based opposition to the NEP was passed on to PAS.

While ABIM in its current permutation no longer resembles the highly politicised student movement of the 1970s, the legacy of its activism continues to inform the process of Islamisation in Malaysia. Many ABIM members who agitated for the introduction of shariah in Malaysia and challenged deep-seated aspects of Malay culture that did not resonate with Islam internalised these values. They reproduced them when they went on in the 1980s and 1990s to assume positions in the Malaysian bureaucracy and government offices, forming the backbone of the bureaucratisation of Islam in the Mahathir and Abdullah administrations. The organisation itself is today an active participant in inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue and human-rights activism. Having said that, under the leadership of Ahmad Azam, the organisation today is increasingly conservative in its position on Islam and, in fact, stood emotionally at the forefront of opposition to the inter-faith commission by championing the need to 'defend the *syariah*.'

Another important group that has in recent times played a critical role is SIS, which is among the most vocal advocacy groups active in Malaysia today.⁴⁶ Established in 1988, SIS has openly challenged male-dominated Islamist orthodoxy on matters such as *syariah*, women's rights, apostasy laws, domestic violence and polygamy, public participation and the hegemonic discourse on Islam propounded by *ulama* (from either UMNO or PAS camps). It was SIS that stood at the forefront of the outcry against the recent JAWI raid on Bukit Bintang nightspots in Kuala Lumpur, calling them 'un-Islamic.' SIS went further to challenge the shariah Criminal Offences Enactment, which provided the laws under which the 20 January arrests were made. The Government, however, did not respond to their calls for a comprehensive review of the constitutional and religious basis for the arrests, and SIS was heavily criticised by TERAS (Teras Pengupayaan Melayu or Malay Advancement Trust) for its 'agenda' to 'discredit Islamic practices.'⁴⁷

Not surprisingly, SIS is seen as a controversial organisation. Its strategies of resistance, which include engaging in Islamic discourse and providing counter-narratives in the hope of expanding the democratic space for Malaysian Muslims, have been rebuffed and, at times, condemned by the religious establishment and its leaders and activists heavily criticised for their 'lack' of sufficient Islamic knowledge and educational background to be challenging *ulama*. More traditional religious leaders, for whom the doors of *ijtihad* are firmly shut, have attacked their activities as deviationist attempts to reinterpret scripture. Consequently, while the Malaysian Government has cautiously endorsed some of its specific initiatives that fit their own agenda of presenting the 'kinder and gentler' face of Islam, such as their opposition to moves to demonise Muslim female public behaviour and dressing deemed 'un-Islamic', it has also kept others, like their ardent criticisms of state religious institutions and their policing activities, at arm's length because of the potential political backlash.

Conclusion

There is a tendency to conflate the process of Islamisation in Malaysia with UMNO-PAS politics. Not surprisingly then, UMNO's victory at the March 2004 General Election, while brandishing the flag of *Islam Hadhari*, was lauded as a triumph for 'moderate' Islam. No doubt to many observers, Abdullah Badawi's Islamisation project, encompassed in the notion of *Islam Hadhari*, will be much more palatable than PAS's fundamentalist visions of *ulama* governance. Yet, as this paper has shown, while Abdullah may have managed to reduce PAS's parliamentary representation, away from the media and outside the confines of the UMNO-PAS competition, the process of Islamisation itself continues to gain new impetus and momentum. There is no denying that Islam has advanced as a major influence on the lives of Muslims in Malaysia over the past thirty years. While the Islamisation of Malaysian politics can plausibly be traced to former Prime Minister Mahathir's calibrated policies, the globalisation of Islam generated by socio-political and cultural forces today has meant that Islamisation in Malaysia is no longer confined to the realms of UMNO-PAS politics; nor can it be controlled by the political actors, whose preference in any case has been to harness its effects and ride its waves in order to enhance their appeal and legitimacy among the crucial Malay-Muslim electorate rather than curtail it. These developments will have ramifications for Malaysia's image as a moderate Muslim country and a model of Islamisation for the Muslim world. More urgent, however, is the impact on the domestic socio-political scene, where Islamisation has uncovered disturbing cleavages and generated negative undercurrents across Malaysia's plural society as it struggles to sustain the *Reformasi* drive and expand politico-discursive space.

In Malaysia, the threat of religion being mobilised and manipulated for political interests, a process represented most profoundly in the UMNO-PAS Islamisation race, no doubt remains a matter of grave concern for scholars, analysts and civil-society activists. Nevertheless, a more alarming consideration is whether this Islamisation process has taken on a life of its own, beyond the control of political institutions and actors. In this respect, the Government's hesitance to formally and publicly address issues that have emerged out of the policing of religious practice by state religious departments, its disinclination towards Muslim intellectuals and civil-society groups seeking a 'third way' of Islam beyond the UMNO-PAS paradigm, or even the current Terengganu state legislature's reluctance to repeal *hudud* laws instituted by the previous PAS government (laws which Mahathir and Abdullah Badawi had staunchly criticised), is telling of the extent to which the stakes have been raised since the process of Islamisation was set in motion three decades ago.

There is, however, perhaps some light at the end of what appears to be a very long tunnel. The débâcle of the January 2005 raids by JAWI sparked an uproar on a scale that caught the UMNO-led government by surprise

and mobilised civil-society movement to lobby against the practice of moral policing which has, thus far, been permitted and tolerated, if not tacitly sanctioned, by the state. This reaction, however, has yet to run its course, and countervailing forces have also emerged among Muslim groups, individuals and politicians who have defended the practice of moral policing. All eyes will now focus on Abdullah Badawi, who has thus far projected the image of restraint and conciliation relatively successfully. Based on recent events, however, and his reluctance to condemn outright certain practices that have undermined the 'moderate' face of his Islamic Malaysia, one should take care not to be too optimistic about his prospects, for it seems that in so far as the nexus between Islam and politics is concerned, the more things change in Malaysia, the more they remain the same.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Patricia Martinez, Helen Nesadurai, Norani Othman, Riaz Hassan, and Anthony Reid for their comments and suggestions on this draft, and Herbert Lin for research assistance.

Notes

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- 2 There are currently several books that exclusively survey the history of PAS. These include J. Funston, *Malay Politics in Malaysia: A Study of the United Malays National Organisation and Party Islam*, Kuala Lumpur: Heinemann Books Asia, 1980; A. Mohamed, *Sejarah Perjuangan PAS*, Kuala Lumpur: Gateway Publishing House, 1987; F. Noor, *Islam Embedded: The Historical Development of the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party, PAS 1951–2003*, Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Sociological Research Institute, 2004.
- 3 See J. Liow, 'Exigency or Expediency? Contextualising Political Islam and the PAS Challenge in Malaysian Politics', *Third World Quarterly*, March 2004, Vol. 25, No. 2, pp. 359–72.
- 4 One should note here that many of these religious leaders who triumphed in 1982 came from ABIM. The role of ABIM in the Islamisation of Malaysian politics will be discussed later.
- 5 V. Hooker, 'Reconfiguring Malay and Islam in Contemporary Malaysia', in T. Barnard (ed.), *Contesting Malayness: Malay Identity across Boundaries*, Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2004, p. 157.
- 6 See S. Nair, *Islam in Malaysia's Foreign Policy*, London: Routledge, 1997.

- 7 See Mahathir's speech at the 33rd Annual UMNO General Assembly, Hilton Hotel, Kuala Lumpur, 10 September 1982.
- 8 M. Mohamad, address at the International Islamic Symposium, Kuala Lumpur, 5 March 1986.
- 9 A discussion of the background to Malaysia's constitutional position on Islam can be found in A. Ibrahim, 'The Position of Islam in the Constitution of Malaysia', in A. Ibrahim, S. Siddique and Y. Hussain (eds), *Readings on Islam in Southeast Asia*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1985.
- 10 See H. Din, '*Islam: Antara Negara Penolakan dan Penerimaan*'. Available online at <http://www.parti-pas.org> (accessed 11 February 2004).
- 11 The Islamic State Document is available online at <http://www.wluml.org/english/news/pas-islamic-state-2003.pdf> (accessed 22 December 2003).
- 12 A. Ibrahim, address at the Sixth Malaysia-Singapore Forum, Petaling Jaya, 6 December 1996.
- 13 See Y. Ohashi, 'Malaysia: The Elusive Islamic State', *Asia Times*, 9 June 2004.
- 14 For a detailed analysis of the implications of the elections, see J. Liow, 'The Politics behind Malaysia's 11th General Elections', *Asian Survey*, Vol. 45, No. 6, November–December 2005, pp. 907–30.
- 15 Channelnews Asia, 'Malaysia's Ruling Party Routs Islamists'. Available online at http://www.channelnewsasia.com/stories/afp_asiapacific/view/76543/1/.html (accessed 23 March 2004).
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- 17 W. Fernandez, 'Election Numbers to Watch', *Straits Times*, 15 March 2004.
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- 20 See B.T. Khoo, 'The House of the Rising Sons: What They Didn't Debate at the UMNO General Assembly', *Aliran*, 2004, Vol. 24, No. 9.
- 21 C. S. Kessler, *Islam and Politics in a Malays State: Kelantan, 1838–1969*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1978; Funston, *Malay Politics in Malaysia*.
- 22 B.T. Khoo, *Searching for Islam in Malaysian Politics: Confluences, Divisions, and Governance*. Working Paper Series No. 72, Hong Kong: City University of Hong Kong, September 2004.
- 23 See Liow, 'Political Islam in Malaysia'; Hooker, 'Reconfiguring Malay and Islam in Contemporary Malaysia'.
- 24 J. Jaaffar, 'When State-Sponsored Firebrands Are Just As Confusing to Muslims', *New Straits Times*, 29 September 2002.
- 25 The Bill was only withdrawn after protests by non-Muslim communities.
- 26 S. Osman, 'How Far Should Islamic Law Go', *Straits Times*, 24 August 1997.
- 27 'Stuck in an Islamic Time Capsule', 1–15 August 1997. Available online at <http://www.muslimedia.com/archives/sea98/capsule.htm> (accessed 4 January 2004). The report also noted that the women 'had admitted that it (their arrest) was a blessing in disguise and they now realised the meaning of dignity in Islam.'
- 28 This has included local policies that, among other things, prohibit non-halal foods in certain school canteens, bans on signboards associated with alcohol in certain states, denial of permits to celebrate Chinese cultural festivals in some schools.
- 29 Several BADAR members were also arrested for extortion and impersonating police authorities in Bandar Sungai Buloh in Selangor.
- 30 The Islamiah Aqidah Protection Bill of Perlis legislated for the conviction of Muslims found guilty of 'deviant' and 'un-Islamic' behaviour. They were to be sent to faith rehabilitation centres in order to 'correct' these 'misinterpretations' of Islam.

- 31 It should also be telling to note that when the formulation of these laws was discussed by the previous state legislature, the four UMNO assemblymen chose to abstain rather than to vote against the PAS motion.
- 32 This observation was made by DAP stalwart Lim Kit Siang in 'UMNO-PAS Islamic competition more far-reaching consequences than 2003 budget'. Available online at <http://www.dapmalaysia.org/english/lks/sep02/lks1866.htm> (accessed 19 September 2002).
- 33 One such case is currently being publicised and investigated by SIS. Available online at <http://www.sistersinislam.org.my/SIS%20Malay%20web2/PressConf/230603m.htm> (accessed 7 January 2004).
- 34 R. Ahmad, 'Good Debate over Bad Behaviour', *Straits Times*, 18 February 2005.
- 35 Thus far, the 4B Movement has already racked up cases in Sungai Rambai and Batang Tiga.
- 36 See A.B. Shamsul, 'A Question of Identity: A Case Study of Islamic Revivalism and the Non-Muslim Response', in T. Ayabe (ed.), *Nation-State, Identity and Religion in Southeast Asia*, Singapore: Singapore Society for Asian Studies, 1998, pp. 55–79.
- 37 A recent movie produced in Malaysia, *Sepet* ('slit eye,' a derogatory Malay term for Chinese) was criticised by the Malaysian censorship authorities as the main protagonist in the movie, a young Malay-Muslim girl, was not scripted to attempt to convert her Chinese boyfriend. The movie was also criticised for a scene when a married Malay-Muslim couple were frolicking in the privacy of their bedroom.
- 38 This is in accordance with the Federal Constitution, article II (4), which permits legislation to be passed to 'control and restrict the propagation of any religious doctrine or belief among the persons professing the religion of Islam.'
- 39 H. Crouch, *Government and Society in Malaysia*, St Leonard's, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1996, pp. 168–9.
- 40 P.K. Yang, 'Local Authorities Ought to be Sensitive to Individual Rights', *Infoline*, Issue 10, May–June 2004. Available online at [http://www.malaysianbar.org.my/resources/pdf/infoline/2004/jul_aug_sep/centrefold_human_writes\(issue11\).pdf](http://www.malaysianbar.org.my/resources/pdf/infoline/2004/jul_aug_sep/centrefold_human_writes(issue11).pdf) (accessed 12 July 2004).
- 41 C. Hong, 'Legal Fraternity Split over Interfaith Conference', *Straits Times*, 8 February 2005.
- 42 C. Theophilus, 'Islam Is a Sensitive Matter, Warns Najib'. Available online at <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/33898> (accessed 25 February 2005).
- 43 'Rethink Interfaith Panel: Abdullah', *Straits Times*, 28 February 2005.
- 44 Further examples of the encroachment of bureaucratised Islam in Malaysian society have been given in P. Martinez, 'The Islamic State or the State of Islam in Malaysia', *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Vol. 23, No. 3, December 2001, pp. 474–503.
- 45 See K.S. Jomo and A.S. Cheek, 'Malaysia's Islamic Movements', in J. Kahn and F. Loh (eds), *Fragmented Vision: Culture and Politics in Contemporary Malaysia*, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1992, pp. 79–106; A.B. Shamsul, 'Identity Construction, Nation Formation, and Islamic Revivalism in Malaysia', in R. Hefner and P. Horvatic (eds), *Islam in an Era of Nation-States: Politics and Religious Renewal in Muslim Southeast Asia*, Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 1997, pp. 207–30.
- 46 See A. Wadud, 'Sisters in Islam: Effective Against all Odds', in D. Newsom and B. Carrell (eds), *Silent Voices*, Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1995, pp. 117–38.
- 47 'Teras Questions 'Agenda' to Discredit Islamic Practices'. Available online at <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/33480> (accessed 9 February 2005).

Glossary

Key: A (Arabic), M (Malay), I (Indonesian), T (Turkish), U (Urdu)

- adat* (M/I) local custom
agama (M/I) religion
akhirat (I) the hereafter
al-Andalus (A) Islamic Spain
al-Islam huwa al-hall (A) Islam is the solution
asalah (A) authenticity
Aswaja (I) Modern Indonesian acronym for the classical Arabic phrase
ahl al-sunna wa'l jama'a – people of the way and the community
bumiputra (M) 'sons of the soil'; indigenous
dar al-Islam (A); *Darul Islam* (I) 'abode of Islam,' under Islamic rule
dar al-harb (A) 'abode of war,' classically areas not under Islamic rule
dar al-kufr (A) abode of unbelief
da'wa (A); *dakwah* (I) Proselytisation, missionary activity (a major concern of reformist and Islamist organisations in modern times)
dawla (A) state
dawla Islamiyya (A) Islamic polity
dhimmi (A) 'protected communities' (classically Christians and Jews) subject to Muslim rule within the *dar al-Islam*
dunia (M/I) (this) world
falsafa (A) philosophy
falsafah hidup (I) philosophy of life, worldview
fana (A) Sufi technical term for obliteration from the self of its human attributes
faqih, pl. *fuqaha* (A) specialist in jurisprudence; also a term of respect for someone held to be 'learned'
fardh (A); *farz* (U) obligation, injunction, religious duty (in Islamic law)
fatwa (A) Islamic legal opinion by a qualified *mufiti*
fiqh (A) Muslim jurisprudence
hadd, pl. *hudud* (A) limit or boundary; in Islamic law, the prescribed physical punishments for certain criminal acts
hadith (A) tradition, particularly the record of the deeds and words of the Prophet and his companions
haji (I/M) one who has completed the pilgrimage to Mecca

- hajj* (A), *haj* (I) pilgrimage to Mecca, the 'fifth pillar' of Islam
hakimiyyat Allah (A) God's rule
hall (A) solution
halal (A) permissible in Islamic legal terms
hijra (A) collective migration, migration of the Prophet from Mecca to Medina, the moment which dates the beginning of the Muslim calendar
ijma' (A) consensus of the legal authorities, or of the religious community; agreement
ijtihad (A) forming a legal opinion through one's own reasoning
ikhtilaf (A) difference of juristic opinion
imam adil (A/I) just leader
imam ja'ir (A) tyrannical, unjust or despotic leader
Islam Hadhari (M) civilisational Islam
al-Islam al-siyasi political Islam
al-jama'a (A) the community
jamiah (I) association
jihad (A) struggle; popularly, a physical battle with infidels
jizya (A) poll tax on non-Muslims
kafir, pl. *kuffar* (A) unbeliever
kemajuan (M/I) progress
keselamatan (M) order, security
khalwat (M) improper activity of couples, derived from Arabic *khalwah*, 'seclusion'
khitta (A) charter
khutba (A), *khutbah* (I) Friday midday sermon
kolot (I) out of date
La ilaha (A) beginning of the Islamic confession of faith: 'there is no god [except God]'
landrad (I) native courts (Dutch *landraad*)
madhhab, *mazhab* (A) school of Muslim jurisprudence
madrasa institution for Islamic study
maksiat (M/I) immoral
ma'nawi (A) abstract, ideational, what relates to a word's sense
masyarakat madani (I) civil society
milla (A), *millet* (T) religious community; in the Ottoman Empire referring to distinct Christian and other communities under Muslim administration
mufti (A) adviser on religious law for a specified jurisdiction
mujtahid (A) one regarded as having the knowledge and authority for *ijtihad* (above)
mullah (T, U) learned Muslim scholar
murtadd (A) apostate
nas (A) humanity
nasl (A) progeny, descendants
nubuwa (A) prophecy, prophethood
nizam (A) 'system', order
nubuwa (A) prophecy, prophethood
pancasila (I) 'five principles' of the Indonesian state philosophy
panghulu (I) Muslim judge in Java

- pir* (U) religious teacher, spiritual guide
qalander (U) wandering holy man, of Sufi tradition
qaum, pl. *aqwam* (A); *kaum* (I) people, nation, folk
qaumi, pl. *qaumiyyin* (A) nationalist
rad agama (I) religious courts (Dutch *raad* = council)
rahma (A) mercy, compassion
rashidun (A) rightly guided (of the first four Caliphs)
rida (A) apostasy
salat (A) five prescribed daily prayers, 'second pillar' of Islam
shari'a (A), *syariah* (M/I) Islamic law
sunna (A) custom, way, usage; conventionally the model behaviour of the Prophet Muhammad.
sunnatullah (A) the way of God
Shi'a (A) Those Muslims who revere the Prophet's son-in-law and cousin Ali as a spiritual leader and believe that he should have been Muhammad's immediate successor and first Caliph rather than being the fourth Caliph. Shi'ite religious law differs in various ways from the Sunni schools.
shura (A) consultation
siyadat al-Islam (A) the supremacy or rule of Islam
siyasa (A) politics
tatbiq al-shari'a (A) implementation of Islamic law
tawassut (A) mediation, a central or middle position
ulama (A/M/I) the learned in religious studies, traditionally in *fiqh*
umma (A); *ummat* (I) Muslim community
usuli (A) following or according to rules or principles
watn, pl. *autaan* (A) homeland
zakat (A) obligatory alms-giving; 'fourth pillar' of Islam

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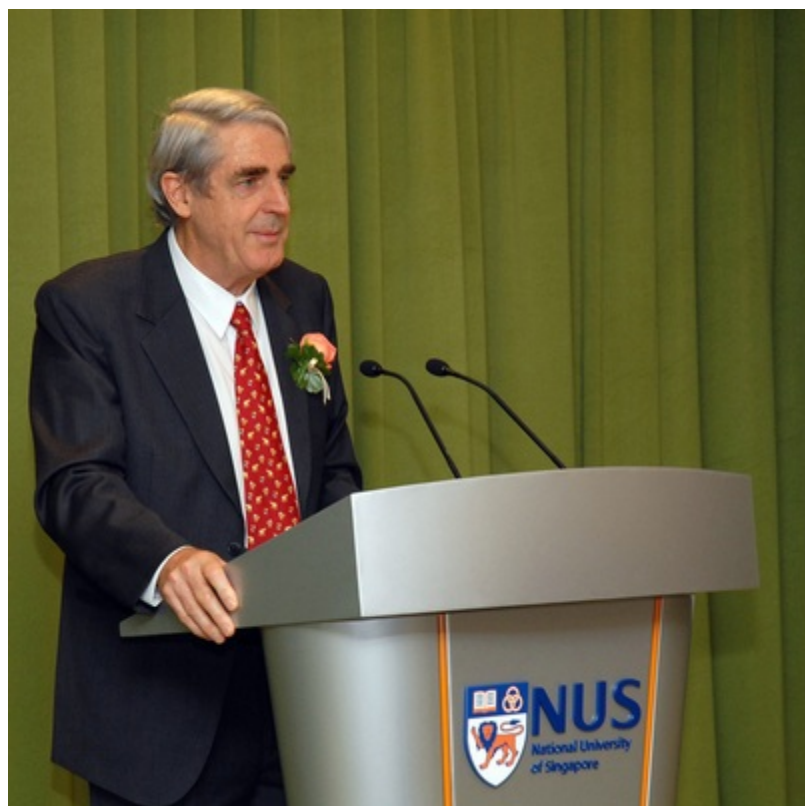
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ISLAMIC LEGITIMACY IN A PLURAL ASIA

A global debate has emerged within Islam about how to coexist with democracy. Some radical groups are taking the view that scriptural authority requires either Islamic rule or a state of war with the essentially illegitimate authority of non-Muslims or secularists. This book places the debate in the context of South and Southeast Asia – not only the home of the majority of the world's Muslims, but also Islam's historic laboratory in dealing with religious pluralism. Pluralism in Asia is not simply a contemporary development of secular democracies, but a long-tested pattern based on both principle and pragmatism. Asian Muslims have argued for many centuries about the legitimacy of non-Islamic government over Muslims, and about the place of non-Muslim peoples, politics and rights under Islamic governance. This book explores and analyses some of the ways these debates have developed, and continue to develop, in South and Southeast Asia. The evidence presented here suggests that pluralism has long been a fact of life in this region, and has always outlasted attempts, such as those of contemporary political Islamists, to deny its legitimacy.

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